“TASHİH-İ İTİKAD:” POLICIES TOWARDS THE KIZILBAŞ AND SHIITES IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

ALİ EMRE KORKMAZ

BOĞAZİÇİ UNİVERSITY

2024

“TASHİH-İ İTİKAD:” POLICIES TOWARDS THE KIZILBAŞ AND SHIITES IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Thesis submitted to the

Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

History

by

Ali Emre Korkmaz

Boğaziçi University

2024

“Tashih-i İtikad:” Policies towards the Kızılbaş and Shiites

in the Late Ottoman Empire

The thesis of Ali Emre Korkmaz

has been approved by:

Assoc. Prof. Yaşar Tolga Cora _____
(Thesis Advisor)

Assist. Prof. Seda Altuğ Bulut _____

Assist Prof. Cihangir Gündoğdu _____
(External Member)

April 2024

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Ali Emre Korkmaz, certify that,

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

Signature……

Date……

ABSTRACT

"Tashih-i İtikad:" Policies towards the Kızılbaş and Shiites in the Late Ottoman Empire

This thesis examines the *tashih-i itikad* policy implemented by the Ottoman State towards the Kızılbaş in Anatolia and the Shiites in Iraq during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The *tashih-i itikad* project, formulated as an official state policy during the reign of Abdulhamid II, primarily aimed at the Sunnitization of non-Sunni Muslim communities. This project is directly related to the centralization and nation-building processes of the modernizing state apparatus of the nineteenth century. Beyond sectarian motives, one of the factors behind this policy was the creation of a society loyal to the Sunni/Hanafi belief, which was the official ideology of the state, and to its leader, the caliph. As seen in most of the documents related to the subject, the concept of a "civilizing mission" is also one of the principal components of the *tashih-i itikad* project. This thesis argues that the *tashih-i itikad* project involved strategic and pragmatic policies that were shaped according to the groups, geographies, ethno-linguistic and socio-economic differences, and the perceived threats posed by these groups. Furthermore, it is contended that even communities with the same sectarian identity were subjected to different policies based on their ethno-linguistic, geographical, and socio-economic conditions. This argument is analyzed by examining the *tashih-i itikad* policies directed at the Kızılbaş in Anatolia and the Shiite communities in Iraq.

ÖZET

“Tashih-i İtikad:” Geç Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Kızılbaşlara ve Şiilere Karşı Politikalar

Bu tez, on dokuzuncu yüzyılın son on yılında Anadolu’da Kızılbaşlara ve Irak'ta Şiilere Osmanlı Devleti tarafından uygulanan “tashih-i itikat” politikası incelenmektedir. II. Abdülhamid döneminde resmi bir devlet politikası olarak kurgulanan “tashih-i itikad” projesi ile, esas olarak Sünni olmayan Müslüman toplulukların Sünnileştirilmesi hedeflenmiştir. Bu proje, on dokuzuncu yüzyılın modernleşen devlet aygıtının merkezileşme ve ulus-inşası süreçleriyle doğrudan ilişkilidir. Salt mezhepsel saiklerin ötesinde, devletin resmi ideolojisi konumunda olan Sünni/Hanefi inancına ve onun lideri olan halifeye bağlı bir toplum yaratma amacı da bu politikanın arkasındaki etmenlerdendir. Konuya dair belgelerin çoğunda da görüldüğü üzere, “medenileştirme misyonu” kavramı da “tashih-i itikad” projesinin en başat bileşenlerinden birisidir. Bu tezde, “tashih-i itikad” projesinin uygulandığı gruplara, coğrafyalara, etno-dilsel ve sosyo-ekonomik farklılıklara ve de bu grupların oluşturduğu tehdit algılarına göre şekillenen stratejik ve pragmatik politikalar olduğu savunulmaktadır. Ayrıca, sadece farklı mezhepsel grupların dışında da, aynı mezhepsel kimliğe sahip olan topluluklar da etno-dilsel, coğrafi ve sosyo-ekonomik durumlarına göre farklılaşan politikalara maruz kalmışlardır. Bu argüman, Anadolu’daki Kızılbaş ve Irak’taki Şii topluluklara yönelik “tashih-i itikad” politikaları incelenerek analiz edilmiştir.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I owe my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor, Yaşar Tolga Cora. Without his support, encouragement, and guidance throughout the thesis writing process, I would not have been able to complete this thesis. I am very grateful for the courses I took during my undergraduate and graduate education, which broadened my horizons and provided significant support.

I also owe a great debt of thanks to my committee members, Seda Altuğ and Cihangir Gündoğdu. Their critiques and contributions helped me address my shortcomings. I am especially thankful to Seda Altuğ for the insights I gained during her course.

I am also very grateful to Yücel Terzibaşoğlu, who broadened my horizons with the courses I took during both my undergraduate and graduate education. I extend my thanks to Zeynep Kutluata, with whom I worked on a project for two years, which helped me explore new research areas beyond the topic of my thesis.

I am grateful to the TÜBİTAK-BİDEB 2210/A Program for providing financial support throughout my master's education, enabling me to continue my studies.

I owe a great debt of thanks to my close friends since the beginning of my undergraduate education, Şebin and Yusuf Veranda. Their unwavering support over the years has greatly contributed to my ability to write this thesis today.

I am also very thankful to Hakan Berke Erkan, Mahmut Polat, and Metin Kiper, who provided me with all the support they could during my master's education.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my housemates and close friends Enes Karakaş and Ubeyd Öktem. They have been more than just housemates; they have been close friends who have always been there to help me.

I am deeply grateful to my mother, Fidan Solmaz, my aunt, Döne Solmaz, and my uncle, Hasan Solmaz, for their endless support since my childhood. I would not be where I am today without them.

Lastly, I thank my beloved cat, Mao, for providing me with emotional support during the stressful times of thesis writing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Historical background…….…...……3

1.2 Debates on Alevi historiography…….…...……9

1.3 Literature regarding *tashih-i itikad* policy…….....13

1.4 *Tashih-i itikad* policies…...……..24

CHAPTER 2: THE KIZILBAŞ "QUESTION" IN ANATOLIA IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY……42

2.1 The description of the Kızılbaş people in the official documents……..…44

2.2 "Possible threats:" the relationship with Armenians and Protestant missionaries…….……57

2.3 The solution: "*tashih-i itikad*"……..….68

CHAPTER 3: "TASHİH-İ İTİKAD" ON THE SHIITES OF IRAQ……...……...87

3.1 Historical background…….……..88

3.2 The spread of Shiism among the nomadic tribes……...…...…90

3.3 Policies towards the Shiites of Iraq during the pre-Hamidian era……93

3.4 *Tashih-i itikad* and policies towards Shiites of Iraq during the Hamidian Regime……95

3.5 The Military Inspection Committee's report and Sırrı Paşa's response……...…….....104

3.6 The Report of Major Ali Rıza Efendi……...…….…..116

3.7 Conclusion……..…….....129

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION…….134

REFERENCES……..……...142

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The lexical meaning of *tashih-i itikad* is basically correcting of the belief. In the Islamic terminology, this term is related to the concept of *emr bi'l-maʾrūf ve nehy ʾani'l-münker*, which means "to enjoin good and to forbid wrong." In the classical Islamic statecraft, this concept has been under the government's responsibility rather than "individual" preaching. In theory, the government had a responsibility to lead Muslim individuals to the right path of Islam.[1] According to Necati Alkan, the first example of *tashih-i itikad* in Ottoman sources is Birgivi Mehmed Efendi's fundamentalist book in the sixteenth century. which was written against the "innovators" in order to defend the "rightful" path of the "pious forefathers."[2] The book has a chapter titled as *Tashih al-İ'tikad.*[3] On the other hand, this usage of the term *tashih-i itikad* cannot be correlated with the *tashih-i itikad* project of the Hamidian regime and its antecedent policies in the nineteenth century before the reign of Abdülhamid II.

The policies of *tashih-i itikad* are a significant topic in the studies of late Ottoman history. Analyzing how religious references underwent transformation within the modernizing state apparatus, efforts of centralization, the aim to increase economic production, and the goal of creating a "citizen" loyal to the Sultan and Caliph through these policies provides an opportunity to understand how these contexts were constructed over "marginal" communities throughout the Empire. The examination of this project holds importance not only for the late Ottoman period but

[1] Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, 29.
[2] Alkan, "The Late Ottoman Sunni Missionary Project," 268.
[3] Alkan, "The Late Ottoman Sunni Missionary Project," 268.

also for the politics of post-Ottoman nation-states. For instance, we observe that the proposal to build mosques in villages with a Kızılbaş/Alevi population, planned in the 1890s for Sunnitization, was widely implemented after the 1980 coup. Therefore, a detailed examination of the *tashih-i itikad* project is crucial for the studies of the late nineteenth and early, even late, twentieth-century Middle East.

One of the points emphasized in this thesis is the argument that the *tashih-i itikad* policies were driven by modern, secular, and strategic factors rather than religious/sectarian motives. While religious references certainly provided a foundational basis, the primary objection was to eliminate situations perceived as obstacles to the state's authority permeating every corner within its boundaries. In this context, although the "superstitious and heretical" beliefs of the communities subjected to this policy were frequently highlighted, the defining concern in these descriptions was more a "security threat" than a purely religious/doctrinal issue. Additionally, one of the most dominant themes, closely mirroring contemporary Western colonialist literature, was the "civilizing mission." These groups, often described in documents as being "outside the circle of civilization," needed to be "civilized" through education and guidance. The means to achieve this was the conversion to Sunni Islam, which had become the official ideology of the state. In summary, the *tashih-i itikad* policies, although they appeared on paper to have similar goals and solutions, were modern and strategic policies that varied according to the sectarian groups targeted, the geography, the socio-economic structures within the groups, and the perceived threat level of these groups in the eyes of the state.

Tashih-i itikad policies should be analyzed within the context of modernization and nation-building process, and "mission civilisatrice." Even though

this concept was "a watchword in the Hamidian regime,"[4] the foundations of this policy began to emerge in the pre-Abdülhamid II period. While Abdülhamid II has implemented the strict centralization and bureaucratic control methods of the Tanzimat regime, he was striving to add an Islamic tone to these policies.[5] Before analyzing *tashih-i itikad* policy's dynamics in-depth, it would be beneficial to investigate the historical background and the existent literature about the subject.

1.1 Historical background

The first point related to *tashih-i itikad* policy is the global transformation of "traditional" empires into modern nation-states and its projection in the Ottoman Empire. Nation-states, and nations in the present sense of having a "common" identity within a given territory, are an invention of the modern world. Pre-modern empires, unlike nation-states, do not have clear and defined borders and do not include the "citizens" of the country, but subjects of different religions, languages and ethnicities who belong to the ruling dynasty. James Scott emphasizes that the pre-modern state was, in many respects, almost "blind," possessing little and precious knowledge of its subjects, their existence, location and identity.[6] The nineteenth century played a significant role in the development of the modern state. Osterhammel argues that while this century may not be explicitly labeled as the era of nation-states, it possesses two significant attributes: firstly, it is characterized as "the age of nationalisms," and secondly, it is marked by the establishment of nation-states.[7] In this context, the Ottoman Empire also had no clearly defined borders and

[4] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 49.
[5] Karpat, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesi*, 101.
[6] Scott, *Devlet Gibi Görmek*, 15.
[7] Osterhammel, *Dönüşen Dünya*, 578-9.

"patriots" in a modern sense, and there was a struggle to keep pace with the "new World order" during this global transformation era.

While the Ottoman modernization is commonly associated with the Tanzimat period, its roots can be traced back to a much earlier time. The implementation of reforms first focused on the military domain, but by the end of the eighteenth century, they had extended to encompass other sectors of the government.[8] The reform period(s) sought to establish a centralized, bureaucratic state which can control every aspect of administrative issues; namely, aimed to reach a sovereign state which has the capacity of penetrating the daily fabric of the society. In this context, it is important to note the substantial differences between the reforms implemented in earlier centuries and the reforms implemented throughout the process of modernization in the nineteenth century. In a similar vein, Kemal Karpat states that the military and economic reforms that took place in previous centuries were adopted within the Ottoman system without giving rise to the belief that they were the product of a sociopolitical order superior to the Ottoman.[9] According to Karpat, the Ottoman modernization in the nineteenth century occurred based on three fundamental conditions. The first was the state's pursuit of centralization, which involved the removal of local authority figures, such as *ayân*s. The ultimate goal was to establish the central government as the sole dominating force throughout the Empire. The second factor was the increasing influence of European powers. This situation "forced the state to adopt new institutions and practices that were unfamiliar to the Ottoman political culture and traditional social structure."[10] The third criterion

[8] Findley, "The Advent of Ideology in Islamic Middle East I," 161.
[9] Karpat, *Osmanlı Modenleşmesi*, 82.
[10] Karpat, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesi*, 80.

was the ideology that would provide legitimacy upon the government.[11] Furthermore, Karpat underscores that the main objective of the modernization drive was to strengthen the central authority rather than enhancing the bureaucratic service delivery capability or improving the living standards of the population.[12]

As can be seen, at first, reform attempts sought to strengthen the army in order to be able compete with the European powers, then, reformation process shifted to more institutional way, which aimed to construct a "modern" governmental structure. In this sense, the aim of centralization, bureaucratization and ideology as a legitimation tool was the most distinctive aspect of this process from the Tanzimat era to the Hamidian regime. What is the most characteristic feature of the Hamidian period is the Islamic emphasis on the reforms for their legitimation. In this context, *tashih-i itikad* policy is one of the most significant projects of the Hamidian regime, which encompasses several interwoven and connected aspects, such as centralization, bureaucratization, nation-making process, pan-Islamism, an aim to organize tax and recruitment to the army, and so on.

Since education is an inherent aspect of the *tashih-i itikad* policy, it would also be beneficial to briefly address the education policy during the reign of Abdülhamid II. In his article "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular' Schools," Benjamin Fortna examines the Islamic influence on the educational policy of the Hamidian period through two morality books. Criticizing the dichotomy of "modern and secular education" versus "traditional Islamic madrasa education" in the historiography of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, Fortna analyzes the Islamic emphasis in the curricula of modern educational institutions. One of the most

[11] Karpat, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesi*, 79-80.
[12] Karpat, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesi*, 82.

significant points in this regard is Fortna's comparative approach, which reveals that the indoctrination of traditional/religious moral understanding through a modern educational method was a global trend. Fortna's comparative examination of educational curricula in various countries such as Europe, the USA, Russia, and China contributes to the discussions of "modernization, Westernization, secularization, and Islamic heritage" in the context of education during the late Ottoman period.[13]

New-style schools were of paramount importance in the centralization efforts of the Ottoman Empire and aimed to provide personnel for the growing bureaucracy.[14] On the other hand, there were differences between the moral education in the schools of the Tanzimat period and those during the late nineteenth century under Abdülhamid II. Fortna states that,

> Indeed, a primary reason for educational expansion in the Hamidian period was to improve the moral qualities of the empire's youth by reasserting indigenous values— namely, Islamic morality. In this respect, the Hamidian educational agenda differed substantially from that of the preceding period of reforms known collectively as the Tanzimat. Broadly speaking, state education during the Tanzimat had been more about imitating the best attributes of Western European education, French in particular. Less thought was given to the ways in which French-style schooling could be adapted to benefit the particular exigencies of the Ottoman context. Under Abdülhamid II, by contrast, state-sponsored education began to assert a much more independent streak, largely as a response to the perception that the growing presence of foreign missionary schools was undermining Ottoman efforts aimed at fostering feelings of loyalty and "Ottomanness."[15]

In the curriculum, the importance of the concepts of "loyalty" and "obedience" in Islamic-referenced moral education was also emphasized. It was determined that "weakness" or "heresy" in religious belief was an obstacle to truly serving "religion

[13] Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman "Secular" Schools," 369-373.
[14] Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman "Secular" Schools," 374.
[15] Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman "Secular" Schools," 375.

and the state."[16] It was recommended that students be monitored by officials not only during moral lessons but also outside of class to ensure their behavior aligned with Islamic principles.[17] This supervision was not limited to students. The state wanted to ensure that teachers were properly delivering the curriculum and not providing "harmful" education. Fortna cites a report written in 1890 about Midhat Bey, a history teacher at the Mekteb-i Mülkiye, in this regard. According to the report, Midhat Bey spent a considerable amount of time teaching about ancient Rome, Egypt, and Greece, and he mocked the principles of religion and the four madhabs.[18] The report emphasized that teachers should not deviate from the curriculum and should focus on "correcting the beliefs" of students, namely *tashih-i itikad*, and their moral education.[19] As can be seen, the fundamental condition for serving religion, the state, and the Sultan with loyalty was adhering to the "correct" belief, which was also the state's official ideology. To achieve this aim, it was necessary to educate the new generations accordingly and to bring non-Sunni communities within this circle of loyalty. Education was seen as one of the primary tools for this purpose.

Fortna notes that Ottoman bureaucrats in the moral curriculum of the Ottoman educational campaign "hoped that they had discovered a formula that would allow the empire to overcome many of its problems by combining the Western education system, successfully demonstrated by Westerners in their own countries and by foreign missionaries and their own minority groups in Ottoman territories, with Islamic morals."[20] Indeed, beyond the moral lessons in the educational curriculum, there were also bureaucrats who suggested that missionary schools should be taken

[16] Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman "Secular" Schools," 376.
[17] Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman "Secular" Schools," 377-8.
[18] Fortna, *Mekteb-i Hümayûn*, 285-286.
[19] Fortna, *Mekteb-i Hümayûn*, 286.
[20] Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman "Secular" Schools," 380.

as an example for the rectification of the faith of non-Sunni groups. For instance, Abdurrahman Hasan Bey, noting the success of Protestant missionaries' educational activities among Armenians in Harput, argued that the same should be applied by the state against the Kızılbaş.[21] Apart from educational methods, the Ottoman approach towards the Kızılbaş in official documents also resembles the attitude of some Protestant missionaries towards Apostolic Armenians. Just as terms like "ignorance" and "being Muslim in name only" were frequently used in Ottoman documents to describe the Kızılbaş and other non-Sunni groups, Armenians were seen by some missionaries as "lacking almost all holy scriptures and pitiably ignorant of true Christianity, even though they call themselves Christians."[22] Armenians were viewed as "utterly ignorant" who needed enlightenment, similar to how the Kızılbaş and other non-Sunni communities were seen by Ottoman bureaucrats as "ignorant" who needed to be educated and guided onto the correct path.

This subject has been studied both as an essential aspect of the Hamidian regime and in studies on the history of communities exposed to the policy of *tashih-i itikad*, such as Alevis, Shiites, Nusayris, Zaydis, Yezidis, and so on. Therefore, it is useful to take a look at some works related to the *tashih-i itikad* policies. However, before examining the literature regarding the *tashih-i itikad* policies, it would be beneficial to mention the debates on Alevi/Kızılbaş historiography briefly.

[21] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.
[22] Aksu, *Osmanlı'da İki Amerikalı Misyoner*, 69.

1.2 Debates on Alevi historiography

The discovery of the Alevi/Kızılbaş[23] people, who were highly concentrated in Anatolia, was initiated in the nineteenth century by Western missionaries and travelers.[24] The Ottoman Empire viewed the actions of missionaries as a significant menace to the security and stability of the state. Consequently, the state became interested in the Kızılbaş people, leading to the creation of official documents that aimed to identify their identity, beliefs, customs, and way of life. This marked a significant shift from the previous disregard towards the Kızılbaş people that persisted until the nineteenth century.

A central subject in the field of Alevi/Kızılbaş history is the discussions surrounding the "origins" of Alevism. The paradigms formed by political positions regarding the "origin" question in Alevi historiography are an essential subject of debate. Although these paradigms have contrasting views on the origins of Alevism, all of them share a similar point of view that Alevism is linked to a specific ethnicity through an essentialist perspective.[25]

During the period examined by this thesis, namely the reign of Abdulhamid II, the state began to produce information about the Alevis/Kızılbaş. In documents primarily authored by local bureaucrats, efforts were made to identify the belief system, traditions, provincial population, and the aspects of the Kızılbaş community in Anatolia deemed "harmful" to the state's security. As a solution, the Sunnitization of the Kızılbaş was advocated as an official state policy. Following the Hamidian

[23] This community is referred to by various terms such as Alevi, Kızılbaş, Bektaşi, Alevi/Kızılbaş, and Alevi/Bektaşi. In this thesis, the term Kızılbaş is preferred because it is the concept commonly used in Ottoman documents. However, depending on the context or the sources consulted, the terms Alevi, Kızılbaş/Alevi, and Alevi/Kızılbaş are also used. Although the widespread use of the term Alevi began with the Republican period, for an early example of its usage, see; Karakaya-Stump, 87.
[24] For a detailed information about Protestant missionaries' relation with the Kızılbaş people, see; Kieser, *Iskalanmış Barış*, 102-116.
[25] Karakaya-Stump, *Vefailik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık*, 7.

regime, during the period of the Committee of Union and Progress, a nationalist orientation was adopted, and the "Turkishness" aspect of the Kızılbaş was "discovered." It began to be argued that this community preserved ancient Turkish beliefs and traditions rooted in Central Asia. The "Köprülü paradigm," which dominated twentieth-century studies on Alevi/Kızılbaş community and faith, was also related to this argument.

Since the late twentieth century, a period also referred to as the "Alevi Revival,"[26] new debates have emerged in Alevi studies, and serious criticisms have been directed at the Köprülü paradigm. Ayfer Karakaya-Stump critically examines the fundamental arguments of the Köprülü paradigm. One of Fuat Köprülü's main arguments regarding the origins of Alevism is the claim that Alevism is a synthesis of ancient Turkish beliefs and Islamic elements. Köprülü also traces the origins of Alevism to the Yesevi order and geographically to Central Asia.[27] This "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" argument has also been used as an ideological tool by the official ideology to shape the Alevi belief.

Karakaya-Stump further critiques the myths that Alevism is a nomadic belief and that it is based almost entirely on oral sources. Karakaya-Stump also questions the normativity of the concepts of syncretism and heterodoxy frequently used in defining Alevi belief.[28] Moreover, she highlights that these concepts are employed by opposing theses. For example, Protestant missionaries, who argue that Kızılbaş/Alevis were forcibly Islamized, as well as theses that claim Alevis have

[26] During the period referred to as the "Alevi Revival," particularly between 1990 and 1995, numerous works on the religious, cultural, and historical aspects of Alevism were penned by Alevis. In this vibrant environment of discussion, debates emerged among Alevis regarding whether Alevism is a sect within Islam or a religion outside of Islam, and tendencies arose to reduce the origins of Alevism to either Turkishness or Kurdishness. For further information about these discussions and its background, see; Van Bruinessen, "Kurds, Turks, and the Alevi Revival in Turkey."
[27] Karakaya-Stump, *Vefailik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık*, 10,185-186.
[28] Karakaya-Stump, *Vefailik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık,* 1-12.

origins in Central Asia as "pure Turks" or relate them to Kurdish identity through Zoroastrian and Iranian traditions, use these concepts.[29]

Karakaya-Stump's work, based on numerous written sources, challenges the myth that Alevism lacks written sources and progresses through oral culture alone, presenting many manuscripts to support her argument. Contrary to Köprülü's theses on Alevism's relation with the Yesevi order and Central Asian origins, Karakaya-Stump emphasizes the influence of the Vefai order, suggesting that the origins of Alevism should be sought in the Middle Eastern geography.[30]

Karakaya-Stump's work holds a significant place in understanding the formation of Alevi/Kızılbaş faith and communities; however, the written sources of the Alevi/Kızılbaş that she presents do not encompass the transformation process of the nineteenth century.

Rıza Yıldırım's book *Aleviliğin Doğuşu: Kızılbaş Sufiliğinin Toplumsal ve Siyasal Temelleri (1300-1501)*, "The Emergence of Alevism: The Social and Political Foundations of Kızılbaş Sufism (1300-1501)," examines the emergence of the Alevi/Kızılbaş movement. Yıldırım advances the thesis that "the conditions and developments that produced Kızılbaş-Alevism cannot be understood solely from a religious perspective, as social, political, economic, and cultural transformations underlie the religious conditions."[31] Yıldırım's another book *Geleneksel Alevilik: İnanç, İbadet, Kurumlar, Toplumsal Yapı, Kolektif Bellek*, "Traditional Alevism: Belief, Worship, Institutions, Social Structure, Collective Memory," on the other hand, is a study that traces the current Alevi belief(s). In this book, Yıldırım also examines the main approaches and examples in Alevi studies. As the title suggests,

[29] Karakaya-Stump, *Vefailik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık*, 6.
[30] Karakaya-Stump, *Vefailik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık*, 188-189.
[31] Yıldırım, *Aleviliğin Doğuşu*, 23.

Yıldırım primarily focuses on the "definition" crisis of Alevi/Kızılbaş belief, tracing the roots of "Traditional Alevism."

Yıldırım posits that the encounter of Alevis who migrated to cities from the second half of the twentieth century with "modernism" created an identity crisis.[32] According to Yıldırım, the values of a closed rural society, when dissolved, created a vacuum that was attempted to be filled with leftist ideologies and Kemalism, resulting in a "hybrid identity."[33] Yıldırım argues that the "spokespersons of the politicized Alevi movement," as he defines them, are unfamiliar with the historical memory of traditional Alevism.[34] Believing that the foundation of the identity crisis stems from "the loss of collective memory," Yıldırım aims to reveal a common memory pool in this work by conducting numerous interviews with *dede*s and Alevi figures. On the other hand, the geographical focus of Yıldırım's study is limited to the Tokat-Sivas-Amasya-Çorum region. The exclusion of the Dersim region, where Kurdish and Zaza Alevis are densely populated, can be seen as a deficiency in examining the "collective" memory of Alevism.

Yalçın Çakmak is another scholar whose work mentions on the subject in the context of the Kızılbaş in Anatolia. Yalçın Çakmak's book, titled *Sultanın Kızılbaşları: II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Alevi Algısı ve Siyaseti*, "Sultan's Kızılbaş: Alevi Perception and Politics during the reign of Abdülhamid II," focuses on the Alevi policy of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. This study has significantly advanced the field of Alevi studies and late Ottoman history. According to Çakmak, research on the Alevi community in Anatolia has primarily concentrated on the 16th century and the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid

[32] Yıldırım, *Geleneksel Alevilik*, 23-24.
[33] Yıldırım, *Geleneksel Alevilik*, 23.
[34] Yıldırım, *Geleneksel Alevilik*, 36.

Empire; however, there is a noticeable absence of studies examining the Alevi presence during the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.[35] This work has successfully addressed this significant gap in Alevi studies. Çakmak, after first examining the attitude towards Kızılbaş/Alevis prior to the nineteenth century —particularly during the reign of Abdulhamid II— reveals the transformation of the state's policy towards Kızılbaş/Alevis. Addressing perceived threats such as the "corruption of their beliefs," their "close relationships" with Armenians and missionaries, and their long-standing reputation as "an unreliable element," Çakmak's work fills a significant gap in Alevi studies by analyzing the transformation of the state's Kızılbaş policy during the modernization process. Additionally, Çakmak explores the *tashih-i itikad* project in his work; however, this topic will be examined in the subsequent subsection.

1.3 Literature regarding *tashih-i itikad* policy

Selim Deringil's works on this subject constitute an important part of the literature on *tashih-i itikad*. Deringil highlights bureaucratization as a crucial aspect of this policy. During the reign of Abdülhamid II, the efforts to centralize and develop a systematic bureaucratic organization resumed as a continuation of the Tanzimat reforms. During this period, there was an attempt to standardize and bureaucratize the belief, with the goal of making people accept the state-defined "official" form of belief. Deringil characterizes the act of designating the Hanefi sect as the "official belief" under the Ottoman Empire as the "Ottomanization of the Şeriat." This strategy was formulated with the dual purpose of redefining the concept of legitimacy rooted in Islam and portraying it as a contemporary ideology, as well as establishing a "national identity"

[35] Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 435.

for individuals who were to be transformed into citizens and given an identity.[36] Deringil compares the Ottoman Empire's experience to that of the other 19th century powers, where "the values and customs of the past to serve an ever more complicated present."[37]In this context, the Ottoman Empire relied on the Hanefi sect as the "social cement" for its interaction with its "subjects/citizens," in accordance with contemporary requirements.[38] One reason for highlighting the Hanefi sect as a measure of legitimization is connected to Abdülhamid II's intention to promote and efficiently utilize the title of caliphate throughout his rule. Islamic jurisprudence typically requires that the caliph be a member of the Quraysh tribe. However, the Hanafi school of thought argues that

> a strong and able ruler was to be recognized as the legitimate sovereign of all Muslims on the condition that he protected Islam and upheld the Şeriat even if he was not from the original sacred Arab clan of Qureish.[39]

Another condition for the "Ottomanization of the Şeriat" was the necessity to systematize Islamic regulations and establish a uniform legal framework that would apply to all "citizens." A prominent example of this is Ahmed Cevdet Pasha's Mecelle.[40] Nevertheless, this endeavor to standardize was not restricted to the legal domain; its objective was to ensure that all individuals conform to the "official belief" by implementing a comprehensive standardization process in all aspects, including the definition, instruction, propagation, and practice of religious beliefs. During the reign of Abdülhamid II, it was compulsory for preachers and "dais" to have training and approval from the Şeyhülislam; and any religious activities that

[36] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 44-67.
[37] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 67.
[38] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 66.
[39] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 48.
[40] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 50.

were not under governmental control, even those from the Sunni sect of Islam, were regarded as dangerous.[41]

An essential aspect of the construction of the "official belief" mentioned by Deringil is the *tashih-i itikad* project, which aimed to be adopted as an official policy. The objective of establishing Hanafism as the official sect and a foundation of legitimacy automatically heightened the state's sensitivity towards non-Sunni/Hanafi Muslim populations, including Alevis, Shiites, Nusayris, Bektashis, and Zaydis. The Sunnitization policy of the Abdülhamid II era specifically targeted these groups, which were categorized as "deviants" and referred to using pejorative names by the government. While the primary focus of this policy was against non-Sunni Muslim communities, it also extended beyond these specific groups. Furthermore, the state also focused on Muslims who were considered "ignorant and lacking knowledge about their own beliefs" namely "rural Islam."[42] The state also targeted Crypto-Christians, *İstavri*s, and Crypto-Jews, *Avdeti*s, viewing their beliefs as in need of "correction" due to the government's "anxiety" regarding the possibility of these groups' "apostasy" from Islam.[43] It is noteworthy that the Yezidis, who described themselves as a distinct religious group from Islam, were recognized by the state as "nominally Muslim" due to practical considerations, even though both the ulama and the local Muslim community views the Yezidis as non-Muslim.[44]

Another theme discussed in Deringil's work is the "civilizing mission," which he defines as "borrowed colonialism." Deringil argues that,

---

[41] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 75-76.

[42] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 77-81.

[43] Zeynep Türkyılmaz analyzes the Ottoman government's "anxiety" regarding the possibility of Christianization of "heterodox" communities as a result of missionary activities in the examples of Crypto-Christians, Nusayris and the Kızılbaş. See; Türkyılmaz, "Anxieties of Conversion."

[44] Ortaylı, *Batılılaşma Yolunda*, 157. An illustration of the Yazidis' rejection of Muslim identity is evident in their refusal to be categorized as Muslims in the demographic records of 1909. Instead, they insisted on being officially recognized as Yazidis. See; Yalçın Çakmak*, Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 124.

> One half of this borrowed colonialism was based on tried and true practices of Islamic Ottoman empire building; the Caliphate, the Sharia', Hanefi Islamic jurisprudence, guilds, and Turkish/Islamic law (*kanun/yasa*). The other half, or 'new' half, was a creature of the nineteenth-century positivist, Enlightenment-inspired centralizing reforms.[45]

Within the framework of the "civilizing mission," the term "circle of civilization" frequently appears in archival documents pertaining to this topic. According to Ottoman officials, anyone with "corrupted" beliefs, nomads, tribes, or non-urban people were regarded as being beyond the "circle of civilization." One of the primary methods to integrate them into the circle of civilization was through *tashih-i itikad*, that is correcting their beliefs. While the notion of *tashih-i itikad* commonly employed for non-Sunni groups, it was still exemplified as the sole means for saving the Sunni tribes living in a state of primitiveness and misguided beliefs in the southern region of Ottoman Libya.[46] Various communities that were perceived as "out of circle of civilization" from different beliefs, ethnicities, languages, geographical locations were portrayed as "living in a primitive and nomadic state," "ignorant," and "lacking the ability to differentiate right and wrong."[47] What is noteworthy in this context is that only being Sunni does not suffice to meet the criteria for being labeled as "civilized." The state aimed to integrate populations that did not adhere to the dominant religious beliefs into Sunni/Hanafism, and also sought to incorporate peripheral nomadic groups, who were seen as deviating from societal norms and not making economic contributions, into the mainstream "circle of civilization." Previously, the "savage" has not been taken under control, but it is now imperative to "civilize" and utilize its potential.[48]

---

[45] Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery," 316.
[46] Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery," 312.
[47] Deringil, *Simgeden Millete*, 83-85.
[48] Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery," 318.

Deringil also discusses different aspects of the *tashih-i itikad* policy in relation to the aforementioned contexts. The Ottoman administration and bureaucrats frequently expressed concerns about various issues related to these communities, including challenges in recruitment and tax collection, doubts about their loyalty to the state and the sultan, and their potential connections with missionaries and foreign powers. These concerns were perceived as significant threats. These sources frequently assert that societies "lacking knowledge" were misguided from the correct course either by their "deceptive" leaders or by external factors such as Protestant missionaries, Shiite *ahunds*, "clerics," or Armenian militants who "confuse" their minds. Furthermore, it should be noted that this observation is not exclusively targeted at Muslim groups. For instance, it is mentioned that the Armenians residing in Eastern Anatolia were likewise subjected to *teşviş-i ezhan,* "confusing their minds," by the missionaries, and it was also stated that they were Armenian *sâde-dilân*, "naïve," who were "unable to differentiate between right and wrong."[49] Deringil also examines the actions taken or enforced against the groups targeted by the *tashih-i itikad* policy. While the actions mentioned, such as constructing schools and mosques, fostering education, and spreading religious teachings through ulema and preachers, are commonly implemented, the author also highlights the varying attitudes and approaches of the bureaucrats responsible for proposing or executing these policies. Although most of these state authorities argue that violent measures are not the solution, there are instances of violence being employed, specifically targeting Yezidis. In Iraq, there were occurrences of the application of coercion towards the Shiites. However, a significant number of bureaucrats expressed

[49] Deringil, *Simgeden Millete*, 83.

disapproval of this approach and authored reports highlighting its potential detrimental effects.

As previously mentioned, studies on the *tashih-i itikad* can be found both in works focused specifically on the concept itself and in studies examining the history of the communities targeted by this policy. Naturally, the theme of *tashih-i itikad* in these studies is present in works covering the nineteenth century. One such work is the aforementioned book by Yalçın Çakmak, titled *Sultanın Kızılbaşları: II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Alevi Algısı ve Siyaseti*. This section will address the subject of *tashih-i itikad* within this work. Another significant study is the book *Dersim'de Osmanlı Siyaseti*, "Ottoman Policy in Dersim," authored by Cihangir Gündoğdu and Vural Genç. This book is based on *layihas* (official reports) and specifically examines the *tashih-i itikad* policy directed towards the Kızılbaş in Dersim. This work specifically focuses on a certain region both thematically and in terms of location and community.

In the late period of the Ottoman Empire, the processes of modernization and centralization played a significant role in the transformation of policies towards non-Sunni groups. Yalçın Çakmak states that the state's position towards the Kızılbaş changed mostly due to the combined effects of modernization and centralization processes, as well as the politics of Pan-Islamism.[50] Abdülhamid II, similar to other contemporary monarchs, aimed to establish a population that could be easily mobilized and controlled under his centralized administration. Abdülhamid II aimed to establish the concept of pan-Islamism as a means of strengthening the process of centralization that had already been initiated by his predecessors. He aimed to

[50] Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 106.

effectively utilize the title of caliphate to achieve this goal.[51] In a similar vein, Gündoğdu and Genç describe the Dersim Reform as part of a broader centralization policy of the Ottoman Empire, which had lost territories and revenue in the Balkans during the nineteenth century, which aimed to control the regions and populations where it could not establish its authority and increase its revenue that would be sent to the central treasury.[52] The Dersim Reforms, implemented from 1848 onwards, also were a component of a centralization policy aimed at curbing the influence of nomads, tribes, and uncontrollable groups in various regions.[53]

Both works underscore the threat perception underlying state policies. First and foremost, the Kızılbaş communities in both Dersim and Central Anatolia were viewed by the state as "unreliable" and "heretical" elements. Additionally, the theme that these communities could be "deviated" by other perceived threats, such as Armenians and Protestant missionaries, due to their "ignorance," "superstitions," or "hostility" towards the state and Muslims, more precisely Sunnis, is frequently addressed in the documents. In his book, Yalçın Çakmak provides numerous examples from documents regarding the relationships or potential relationships between the Kızılbaş and Armenian and Protestant missionaries. In the second chapter of this thesis, many of these documents will be examined in detail.

Gündoğdu and Genç also note that the aspect of threat perception of the subject. They mention specific factors to Dersim in addition to the overarching centralization agenda of the Ottoman Empire that were effective for the need of a reform plan. One of the most challenging problems for the state at that time was the Armenian "question." The strategic positioning of Dersim in the heart of the region,

[51] Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 106-109.
[52] Genç & Gündoğdu, *Dersim'de Osmanlı Siyaseti*, 15.
[53] Genç & Gündoğdu, *Dersim'de Osmanlı Siyaseti*, 15,29

where the Armenian nation-building process began to gain momentum, played a significant role in the state's objective of asserting complete control over the region.[54] Another threat perception of the Ottoman Empire regarding Dersim was the danger of a possible influence of Shiites and Protestant missionaries on the "ignorant" Kızılbaş population of Dersim.[55]

Both works emphasize the importance of a critical approach to primary sources, particularly the *layiha* literature. In his book, Çakmak examines numerous documents from state archives and missionary sources. Explaining his methodological approach to these sources, Çakmak underscores that the documents are unilateral, reflecting the perspectives of those who authored them regarding the Kızılbaş/Alevis.[56] Additionally, the book provides an opportunity for comparison by including primary sources produced by Westerners, even though these do not reflect the voices of the Kızılbaş/Alevis themselves, offering a basis for comparison with the documents from state archives.[57] Gündoğdu and Genç also discuss the methodological aspects of the use of *layiha*s in studies. In the context of Dersim, the *layiha*s, which often have a biased perspective, generally exhibit an essentialist approach towards the tribes, and the subjectivity of the tribes cannot be observed in the *layiha*s.[58] Therefore, it is imperative to adopt a critical approach when utilizing the *layiha* literature, and it is equally important to scrutinize the execution of the proposed policies.

Another important point is the "civilizational" discourse of *layiha*s. As can be observed in other cases, in these reports, the prominent discourse was that those who

[54] Genç & Gündoğdu, *Dersim'de Osmanlı Siyaseti*, 27.
[55] Genç & Gündoğdu, *Dersim'de Osmanlı Siyaseti*, 31-32.
[56] Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 55.
[57] Çakmak, Sultanın Kızılbaşları, 57-63.
[58] Genç & Gündoğdu, *Dersim'de Osmanlı Siyaseti*, 14-15.

are “savage” and “out of the circle of civilization” should be “civilized” and to turn them into citizens. At this point, in the reports written by the bureaucrats, many points that posed a “problem” for the state, such as the beliefs of the people of the region, their tribal structure, and the sources of their “ignorance” were analyzed in an “Orientalist” style. The officials who prepared the reports described the people of the region as “primitive and rebellious tribes” and “ignorant of the requirements of religion” and saw themselves as their “civilizers.”[59] Concepts of Deringil’s “borrowed colonialism” and Makdisi’s “Ottoman Orientalism” are also mentioned in Gündoğdu and Genç’s work, and this attitude is exemplified by the discourse in the *layiha*s. In one of the most striking examples, Mikdad Midhat Bedirhan, who wrote a report on Dersim, described the inhabitants of the region as “resembling the savage tribes of Africa, naked and eating grass roots and acorns, human beings in form and animals in appearance.”[60]

Both works examine the foundational methods of the *tashih-i itikad* project, such as the construction of mosques and schools in villages, the dispatch of preachers and teachers, and the exile of religious and social figures deemed obstacles to the “correction of beliefs” within these communities. Similarly, the works also address the challenges encountered in implementing these recommendations, particularly the financial constraints. Yalçın Çakmak discusses the constraints in carrying out the policies suggested as remedies in the context of *tashih-i itikad*. The main problem at hand was the lack of financial means to construct schools and mosques in the Kızılbaş villages. As a result, the execution of these measures has been significantly restricted, both in terms of the construction of the intended schools and in terms of

[59] Genç & Gündoğdu, *Dersim’de Osmanlı Siyaseti*, 36.
[60] Genç & Gündoğdu, *Dersim’de Osmanlı Siyaseti*, 50.

teachers' salaries.[61] At this point, the state encouraged the Kızılbaş to build mosques and schools themselves.[62] However, these measures met with limited success due to insufficient financial resources and lack of facilities, as the Kızılbaş population was located in many villages across a vast geography.[63] While Abdülhamid II's attempt to convert the Kızılbaş to Sunni Islam was not successful, Çakmak highlights that only a small number of Kızılbaş/Alevis were directly converted; however, some Kızılbaş/Alevis did adopt certain Sunni practices and incorporated them into their own identity and beliefs. Çakmak argues that this phenomenon, which can still be observed in some Kızılbaş/Alevi villages today, can be originated from the state policy implemented by Abdülhamid II.[64]

Both works make a significant contribution to the study of *tashih-i itikad* policies and late Ottoman history by critically evaluating primary sources and elucidating their relationship to the processes of centralization and modernization. This thesis argues that the state's policies towards different non-Sunni groups, as well as towards a community sharing the same sectarian identity, varied according to their regional, ethno-linguistic, and social structures. This does not imply that the state's policies towards groups within the community were entirely different. On the other hand, analyzing these distinctions is crucial for understanding the context of centralization and modernization and for examining the antecedents of the policies that shaped the construction of national identity in the later Turkish nation-state.

In this context, it can be said that there were differences in the policies directed towards the Kızılbaş in Dersim, who spoke Kurdish and Zaza and had a dominant tribal structure, compared to those in Central Anatolia. Of course, the

[61] Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 317,323.
[62] Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 323.
[63] Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 317.
[64] Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 440.

documents share common elements, such as the "deviance" of the Kızılbaş faith, the perception of the Kızılbaş as "unreliable" and threatening, and the belief that the solution lay in "correcting their beliefs" through Sunnitization. However, when considering the content, scope, and emphasis placed on the solutions proposed in the *layihas*, it is clear that the Kurdish Kızılbaş of Dersim were perceived as a more serious threat.

Yalçın Çakmak states that "the relationship between Dersim and the Ottoman Empire has always simultaneously been an Ottoman-Kızılbaş relationship" and that "the developments shaping the Ottoman perception and policy towards Dersim cannot be evaluated outside the concept of Kızılbaş."[65] [ref]. The central role of the Kızılbaş factor cannot be denied. However, the *layihas* describe the Kızılbaş of Dersim as *ahali-i gayr-i mutia*,[66] meaning those who are "disobedient," emphasizing the tribal structure, "brigandage," and the theme of being "outside the circle of civilization" suggesting that other factors also need to be considered. In Central Anatolia, heightened vigilance occurred in response to threats like a "possible" rebellion of Anşa Bacılılar.[67] Nonetheless, the aforementioned points indicate that Dersim was perceived as a more serious threat due to its structural differences.

1.4 *Tashih-i itikad* policies

[65] Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 387.
[66] One of the most noteworthy points in the documents regarding Dersim is the way in which the officials categorized the population of the region. The population of Dersim is categorized according to their relationship with the authorities, their knowledge of the Turkish language, their social and economic relations, and their beliefs. The people of Dersim are classified into two groups: *ahali-i mutia*, meaning those who are "obedient," and *gayr-i mutia*, meaning those who are "disobedient." People who are economically unproductive, nomads, members of the Kızılbaş, and incapable of speaking Turkish are considered "disobedient," whereas people who do not fit these categories are considered "obedient." Another crucial factor was the presence of commercial affiliations and connections with the surrounding region. In this categorization, it can be observed the abovementioned motivations of the reforms, such as the aims of centralization, nation-making process, increasing economic productivity. See; Genç & Gündoğdu, *Dersim'de Osmanlı Siyaseti*, 35-37.
[67] Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*, 337-354.

As indicated in previous pages, the lexical usage of the term *tashih-i itikad* in the pre-eighteenth century and the official policy of *tashih-i itikad* project in the nineteenth century differ from each other in terms of the latter's function as a political tool. In this context, it is useful to mention the attempts for *tashih-i itikad* in the pre-Hamidian period.

Examples of *tashih-i itikad* can be examined in three cases prior to the rule of Abdülhamid II. The first of these instances is some documents regarding the "civilizing" of certain "disobedient" Caucasian tribes by correcting their beliefs towards the end of the eighteenth century.[68] The second case was the struggle against the Bektaşis subsequent to the disbandment of the Janissary Corps in 1826. In order to implement structural reforms inside the Empire, the Bektaşi order, which had ties to the Janissary Corps, was also eliminated.[69] Based on this context, it may be inferred that a primary objective of the strategy against the Bektaşis was to strengthen the authority of the central government. Another noteworthy aspect is the state's utilization of the Naqshbandi, a Sunni order, as a collaborator in this process of elimination.[70] Lastly, according to Alkan, the primary objective of implementing *tashih-i itikad* policies during the Tanzimat period was military in essence. The policy sought to foster cohesion among the soldiers by uniting them under a shared Sunni faith.[71] Regarding the nature of the *tashih-i itikad* policy during the Tanzimat period, Alkan asserts that,

> The Tanzimat was a period during which the Ottoman state was more tolerant towards "heterodox" groups; it attempted to unite the various non-Sunni sects for military purposes and "correction of belief(s)" was applied in a broader fashion. Ottoman thinkers, recognising that a significant part of the Ottoman

[68] Alkan, "The Late Ottoman Sunni Missionary Project," 262,269.
[69] Alkan, "The Late Ottoman Sunni Missionary Project," 269-272.
[70] Alkan, "The Late Ottoman Sunni Missionary Project," 272.
[71] Alkan, "The Late Ottoman Sunni Missionary Project," 286.

> population was composed of different sects, many of whom were considered to be Muslim by name, called for missionary proselytisation.[72]

Before presenting this thesis' argument regarding the *tashih-i itikad* policies of the Hamidian regime, which claims there was not one single policy towards every non-Sunni community, it is imperative to briefly mention other communities to whom this policy was enforced. Prior to the reign of Abdülhamid II, the practice of "correcting their beliefs" in relation to the Yezidis had previously been implemented for military objectives. It is worth mentioning that the Yezidis, who were not acknowledged as Muslims by both the Sunni ulema and the general public, were officially acknowledged as Muslims by the state and were treated equally to Muslims in terms of taxation and military service.[73] For instance, when the Yezidis declined to put on blue uniforms based on their religious convictions, arrangements were made for them to wear military attire in an alternative color.[74] On the other hand, even though the most common approach in the *tashih-i itikad* policies was mostly based on "tolerant," and inclusive-assimilationist, Yezidis have been the group most subjected to violence during Sunnitization policies. The primary conflict between the Ottoman government and Yezidis was compulsory military service. In this context, Yezidis refused to the government's argument that they are a "heretical" sect of Islam; instead, they defended that Yezidism were a distinct religion, and they should be treated like Jews and Christians in the conscription matter.[75]

Another non-Sunni community targeted by the *tashih-i itikad* policies was Zaydis in Yemen. The Ottoman Empire's presence in Yemen, which ended with the Qasimi dynasty in 1630, was attempted to be reestablished with the reconquest of

[72] Alkan, "The Late Ottoman Sunni Missionary Project," 286.
[73] Ortaylı, *Batılılaşma Yolunda*, 157.
[74] Ortaylı, *Batılılaşma Yolunda*, 157.
[75] Gölbaşı, ""Heretik" Aşiretler ve II. Abdülhamid Rejimi, 89.

Yemen in 1871-1873. Beginning from the Tanzimat period, it was aimed to establish its central authority in every vilayets of the Empire. This goal was particularly pursued in the peripheries where the Arab population was concentrated, and direct control was not maintained. On the other hand, as Kühn points out, while the previously existing ties between the center and the localities in Tripolitania, Mesopotamia, and the Levant were attempted to be strengthened in the context of centralization, Yemen constituted a different case.[76] According to Kühn, the case of Yemen was "much more about the imposition of alien rule and hence more comparable to forms of European or Japanese imperialist expansion during this period."[77]

Kühn describes the Ottoman efforts to establish authority in Yemen as "an imperialist expansion project."[78] He also considers the "civilizing mission" in Yemen within this context. Certainly, when compared with other examples, there are unique aspects to the policies in Yemen. However, in the case of Yemen, one can observe commonalities with the "civilizing mission" in Anatolia, in addition to other Arab provinces and the Balkans. The goal of "civilizing" a community considered to be "outside the circle of civilization," creating a society loyal to the state and the caliph, correcting "deviant" beliefs through Sunni/Hanafi propaganda, and promoting education to achieve these objectives can be seen in almost every example. On the other hand, identifying and analyzing the unique situations in Yemen is crucial for understanding the differentiation of *tashih-i itikad* policies.

Even though the reconquest of Yemen took place in 1873, the conflict between the Zaydi imams and local forces with the state continued. The Zaydi

[76] Kühn, "Shaping Ottoman Rule in Yemen," 33.
[77] Kühn, "Shaping Ottoman Rule in Yemen," 33.
[78] Kühn, "Shaping Ottoman Rule in Yemen," 29.

imams' authority in the region, along with its tribal structure and the enduring influence of local authorities in its internal affairs, rendered it one of the most challenging areas for the Ottoman Empire to undertake reforms for centralization. Under the reign of Abdulhamid II, there were uprisings of the Zaydi imams in 1891, 1894, and 1904.[79] Therefore, the struggle against the Zaydis became one of the most important agenda items for the Ottoman government in the region.

To analyze the aspects of the Ottoman Empire's policies towards Yemen and the Zaydis in relation to *tashih-i itikad* during the late nineteenth century—especially in its last decade—it is necessary to address the Zaydi understanding of the imamate and the "civilizing mission" designed by Ottoman bureaucrats for the local population. According to Zaydism, the imam, who is the leader of the believers, must be a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, a religious and legal leader, and a warrior.[80] This clearly undermined the legitimacy of the Ottoman sultan, who claimed to be the "caliph of all Muslims." Additionally, it was previously noted that Yemen differed from other provinces with a significant Arab population where central authority could not be fully established. For instance, unlike other regions, symbolic gestures of loyalty such as delivering the khutbah in the name of the sultan/caliph or minting coins in his name did not exist in Yemen.[81] Therefore, the Zaydis used the title of "sultan" rather than "caliph" for the Ottoman monarch.[82] An Ottoman bureaucrat, Mahmud Nedim Bey, attempted to alleviate Abdulhamid II's concerns about the Zaydi imam's attitude and the usage of the title *amir al-mu'minin*, "the commander of the faithful," by claiming that this usage stemmed from theological differences rather than a political challenge against the Ottoman

[79] Barlak, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Yemen Zeydîlerinin Osmanlı Hilâfetine Bakışı," 1511.
[80] Kühn, "Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism," 320.
[81] Kühn, "Shaping Ottoman Rule in Yemen," 30.
[82] Barlak, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Yemen Zeydîlerinin Osmanlı Hilâfetine Bakışı," 1517.

Empire.[83] Thus, the Zaydi Imamate and the Hamidian Caliphate confronted each other due to the meanings attributed to the definitions of the Caliphate and the Imamate. According to the Zaydi sect, the imam possesses the authority to *emr bi'l-maʾrūf ve nehyʾani'l-münker*, "enjoin good and forbid wrong," within society.[84] Therefore, the role of an imam extends beyond the religious sphere and encompasses the organization of social, political, and economic influence. This circumstance, which contradicted the centralist policies of the Hamidian regime, was a significant occurrence that necessitated the Zaydis' *tashih-i itikad*, "correcting of the belief."

In the case of Yemen, it is noteworthy that the discourse of "deviation from the sharia," used by the Ottoman administration against communities they considered "heretic" and "uncivilized," was employed as a counterargument by the Zaydis against the Ottoman administration. Similar to the discourse against these groups observed in the Ottoman archival documents, Zaydi Imam Hamid ad-Din asserts that the Ottomans almost "created a new religion."[85] According to Barlak, the Zaydis alleged that Ottoman officials oppressed the people, engaged in the intermingling of religiously forbidden and permissible practices, indulged in alcohol use, and committed acts of adultery. They also utilized this discourse to gain support from tribes in the region and to emphasize the religious legitimation of the revolt.[86] This situation can be said to have increased the perceived threat due to its clear contradiction with Abdulhamid II's legitimacy ideology, which focused intensely on Islamic references. Therefore, Islamic symbols and references were given greater importance here. For example, the government requested Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha, who was designated as the governor of Yemen in 1898, to don "an ostentatious turban and

[83] Barlak, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Yemen Zeydîlerinin Osmanlı Hilâfetine Bakışı," 1516-1517.
[84] Barlak, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Yemen Zeydîlerinin Osmanlı Hilâfetine Bakışı," 1512.
[85] Barlak, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Yemen Zeydîlerinin Osmanlı Hilâfetine Bakışı," 1511.
[86] Barlak, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Yemen Zeydîlerinin Osmanlı Hilâfetine Bakışı," 1512-1514.

a loosely-fitted robe."[87] Within this particular framework, in the case of Yemen, both the State and the "heretic" are actively engaging in the creation of discourse and struggle with each other regarding the matter of religious legitimacy.

The "civilizing mission" is one of the most significant components of the *tashih-i itikad* policy against the Zaydis in Yemen. Kühn analyzes the Ottoman bureaucrats' memoranda *(layiha*s) and Ahmed Reşid's two-volume *book Târîh-i Yemen ve San'a*, "History of Yemen and Sanaa," to illustrate how Ottoman officials produced knowledge regarding the "civilizing mission" in Yemen. This knowledge production aimed to legitimize the re-conquest of Yemen as "a mission to civilize a 'savage' population."[88] In the documents, the local population is predominantly described as "uncivilized" and "backward." One of the main reasons for this "backwardness" is attributed to the Zaydi imams exploiting the "ignorance" of the people to maintain their influence. Notably, Ahmed Reşid presents a perspective that diverges from the traditional view, which considers Zaydism as a "heretic" belief outside Sunni orthodoxy. Ahmed Reşid argues that the source of the problem is the Zaydi understanding of the imamate—whereby a legitimate leader must be a descendant of the Prophet and a rebel—which the Zaydi imams exploit to perpetuate constant chaos and backwardness in the region. Ahmed Reşid distinguishes between the Zaydi imams and the Zaydi and non-Zaydi populace, stating that the problem of the people is their ignorance.[89] As Kühn notes, Ahmed Reşid's approach employs a modern discourse based on "backwardness" and "primitiveness" rather than a theological and sectarian perspective.[90]

[87] Özbozdağlı, "II. Abdülhamit'in Yemen'de Islahat Çabaları," 1328.
[88] Kühn, "Shaping Ottoman Rule in Yemen," 15.
[89] Kühn, "Shaping Ottoman Rule in Yemen," 46-49.
[90] Kühn, "Shaping Ottoman Rule in Yemen," 47.

The politics of the Hamidian regime in Yemen can be divided into three aspects: military operations, "counsel," and negotiation.[91] The government's primary efforts were to establish its complete authority over Yemen, which is related to the issues of tax collection, administrative and judicial centralization, and providing ideological fortification via the caliphate as a legitimation tool. The most urgent attempt to establish authority in Yemen was to construct and strengthen the military presence of the Empire in the region. The objective was to change the earlier practice of sending troops to the region solely in response to rebellions and instead establish a permanent military presence in the region.[92] In order to maintain public order and exert control over the tribes, it was deemed imperative to construct a strong military organization; thus, the Seventh Army was established in Yemen to achieve this goal.[93] The presence of a strong and permanent army was also needed for regular tax collection because the tribal sheikhs and Zaydi imams were collecting taxes, creating a conflict of financial interest with the central government.[94]

Apart from strengthening the army, education was seen as one of the most prominent remedies similar to other examples of *tashih-i itikad* policies. The objective was to achieve the "civilizing" mission by building schools in the region. It was also aimed to bring tribal chiefs and sheikhs to Istanbul to educate them and enhance their connection with the government.[95] It was suggested to establish primary, secondary, and high schools in select cities of Yemen, and also to bring some students from these schools in Yemen to Istanbul for higher education.[96]

[91] Özbozdağlı, "II. Abdülhamit'in Yemen'de Islahat Çabaları," 1326.
[92] Özbozdağlı, "II. Abdülhamit'in Yemen'de Islahat Çabaları," 1331.
[93] Özbozdağlı, "II. Abdülhamit'in Yemen'de Islahat Çabaları," 1331.
[94] Özbozdağlı, "II. Abdülhamit'in Yemen'de Islahat Çabaları," 1333-1336
[95] Özbozdağlı, "II. Abdülhamit'in Yemen'de Islahat Çabaları," 1330.
[96] Özbozdağlı, "II. Abdülhamit'in Yemen'de Islahat Çabaları," 1338-1339.

Kühn argues that the policy in Yemen during the reign of Abdulhamid II aimed to Ottomanize the local population, whereas after 1908, the approach shifted to treating them "as a subject people rather than being recognized as Ottoman citizens."[97] However, in this context, Kühn analyzes the "colonial" approach to Yemen policy, examining the literature on Yemen during Abdulhamid II's reign and defining "differentiation practices" as characteristic of colonialism. For example, he cites Rüşdü Pasha to illustrate the notion that Yemen was different from the "more developed" parts of the empire: "Administratively, the sancak of Hudayda was organized just like that of Izmid. But its population has not been made to resemble that of Izmid."[98]

This issue is not unique to the literature on layiha. Despite the Tanzimat process aiming to establish a standard legal, administrative, financial, military, and judicial structure in every province of the empire, in Yemen, only Sharia courts were established instead of Nizamiye courts, and practices such as taxation and conscription were shaped according to the local population's "customs and dispositions."[99] This situation is significant for demonstrating that the place of *tashih-i itikad* policies, as part of the "civilizing mission" in Yemen, varied according to the need for centralization beyond sectarian motivations.

An example of this is found in a document dated 1898, where the governor of Yemen indicates a request from some Zaydi ulemas in the region to establish a Hanafi madrasa in Sanaa. According to the governor, this "unexpected" request from this group, "who have not been renowned for their loyalty," had to be carried out because the urban Zaydis were "relatively more moderate and susceptible to reason

[97] Kühn, "Ordering Urban Space in Ottoman Yemen, 345-346.
[98] Kühn, "Ordering Urban Space in OttomanYemen," 346.
[99] Kühn, Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism," 316.

than were the savage tribes."[100] As can be seen, Zaydis were considered to be "relatively more civilized" compared to "savage" tribes, and it was thought that their beliefs could be "corrected" more easily through education and guidance. On the other hand, the very limited effectiveness of these attempts compelled the state to engage in negotiations with the Zaydis and local actors to integrate them with the center.[101]

Before mentioning policies regarding the Nusayris, it would be beneficial to contribute to the discourse on "civilizing" and the emphasis on civilization. Mostafa Minawi states that in the nineteenth century, the concepts of "civilized" and "uncivilized" were not merely linguistic terms but also shaped international law. He asserts that the world was divided into three categories: "civilized," "uncivilized," and "semi-civilized," with international law encompassing only the "civilized" nations.[102] Minawi suggests that the Ottoman Empire's efforts to be classified among the "civilized" nations were motivated not only by a desire to acquire new territories but also by a goal to maintain sovereignty over its existing territories.[103] In this context, the international dimension of the civilizing mission during the late Ottoman period can also be observed.

The Nusayris, also known as Alawites, were another group targeted by the *tashih-i itikad* policy. Similar to the situation with Kızılbaş, the Nusayris faced fatwas during the pre-modern era, which called for their execution and seizure of their possessions on the grounds of "heresy" and "infidelity." An early instance of such fatwas was produced by Ibn Taymiyyah, a prominent scholar from the fourteenth century who also exerted considerable impact on contemporary radical

[100] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 76.
[101] Özbozdağlı, "II. Abdülhamit'in Yemen'de Islahat Çabaları," 1344.
[102] Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*, 8-10.
[103] Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*, 10.

Islamist organizations.[104] However, during the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire, the state's approach towards Nusayris dramatically changed in the nineteenth century, especially during the Hamidian period.

The state's policy towards the Nusayris until the mid-nineteenth century can be examined in the context of centralization. While Anatolia and Rumelia were largely taken under control during the reign of Mahmud II, there were examples of resistance against the central authority in the mountainous regions of Palestine and Syria by Nusayris and Druzes, both were seen as "heretic" sects.[105] Prior to the change under the rule of Abdulhamid, the state's approach towards the Nusayris was mostly focused on tax collection and maintaining public order.[106] During this period, the state predominantly employed coercive methods, while the Nusayris resisted and made efforts to revolt multiple times.[107] During the reign of Abdülhamid II, particularly towards the late nineteenth century, the state's "official" policy was to assimilate the Nusayris through the *tashih-i itikad* and convert them to Hanafi/Sunni Islam.

Similar to other cases, the state viewed the missionaries' activities among the Nusayris as a danger and this influenced the development of the policy towards them. Christian missionaries began to operate among the Nusayris in 1852, and the state expressed alarm about the possibility of Christianization of the Nusayris due to the fact that their faith was considered "deviant" by the state.[108] It was emphasized that the missionaries tried to Christianize the Nusayris through education, and the methods of Christian missionaries were taken as an example in this "counter-

[104] Mertcan, *Türk Modernleşmesinde Arap Aleviler*, 42-44.
[105] Mertcan, *Türk Modernleşmesinde Arap Aleviler*, 66-67.
[106] Mertcan, *Türk Modernleşmesinde Arap Aleviler,* 80-81.
[107] Akbulut, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Nusayrîleri Sünnileştirme Çabaları", 97; Mertcan, *Türk Modernleşmesinde Arap Aleviler*, 84-85, 93-97.
[108] Akbulut, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Nusayrîleri Sünnileştirme Çabaları," 98-100.

missionary" project.[109] In this context, a prominent approach employed in the *tashih-i itikad* policy was the promotion and dissemination of education. In contrast to the specifically targeted school constructions for the Kızılbaş people in Anatolia, the construction of schools for the Nusayris was carried out in a more methodical and organized manner. The cause of the situation can be attributed to the Nusayris' relatively positive response to the Sunnitization program.

The primary distinction of the *tashih-i itikad* policy towards Nusayris, in contrast to other non-Sunni communities, is in the widespread adoption of the Hanafi sect, as demonstrated in the archival records. Prior to the implementation of the *tashih-i itikad* policy as a systematic official project, a small number of Nusayris expressed a desire to attend Sunni mosques in 1870.[110] As a result of these requests, the government decided to build mosques and schools in the region. During the 1890s, when the policy of *tashih-i itikad* was "officialized," the mass conversion of Nusayris to Sunnism became widespread.

On the other hand, the conflicts between the Nusayris and the Sunni population have caused a crisis in the state's targeted process of Nusayris' conversion to Sunnism. The economic relations between Nusayris and Sunnis played a significant role in this problem. Sunni landlords who had an important interest in exploiting the labor of the Nusayris were against these widespread conversions.[111] In the reports, it is also stated that some officials in the region mistreated the Nusayris and that this situation could prevent the Nusayris from becoming Sunni and potentially lead them to align with the missionaries.[112] Ahmed Şakir Pasha, a

[109] Akbulut, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Nusayrîleri Sünnileştirme Çabaları," 100.
[110] Mertcan, *Türk Modernleşmesinde Arap Aleviler*, 101; Akbulut, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Nusayrîleri Sünnileştirme Çabaları," 99.
[111] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 83.
[112] Akbulut, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Nusayrîleri Sünnileştirme Çabaları," 103.

regional inspector, reported this issue to the central authority in the following manner: "The political value of this development [the conversion of the Nusayris to Hanefi Islam] cannot be squandered in the narrow interests of a few landowners."[113] Acts of aggression toward Nusayris, who embraced Sunnism, such as their exclusion from mosques, were particularly prevalent in cities like Antakya, Iskenderun, and Adana.[114] The local authorities asserted that this situation constituted an obstacle to the Nusayris' *tashih-i itikad* and their integration into the Hanafi/Sunni "nation" and emphasized the need to prevent this longstanding animosity and opposition against the Nusayris. In this context, Arif Paşa, the governor of Aleppo, strongly opposed the establishment of distinct schools and mosques exclusively for Nusayris since it would perpetuate their segregation.[115] According to Arif Paşa, if Sunnis and Nusayris were to attend the same mosque and receive education in the same schools, it would enhance their ties and effectively resolve the existing animosity between them.[116]

Lastly, exile and incentive strategies were also employed in the Tashih-i İtikad program towards the Nusayris. It was suggested to exile some Nusayri sheikhs who were determined to maintain their beliefs and resist the process of Sunnitization.[117] On the other hand, some Nusayris were also assigned official duties in order for the assimilation to be successful. For instance, Garibzade Cemal Efendi, who was a Nusayri chief, served as a member of the Civil Court of Appeal.[118] Furthermore, some Nusayri leaders who "converted" to Sunni Islam were granted medals as a kind of honor, and there was a deliberate effort to provide employment

[113] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 84.
[114] Akbulut, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Nusayrîleri Sünnileştirme Çabaları," 102-103.
[115] Akbulut, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Nusayrîleri Sünnileştirme Çabaları," 103.
[116] Akbulut, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Nusayrîleri Sünnileştirme Çabaları," 103.
[117] Mertcan, *Türk Modernleşmesinde Arap Aleviler*, 109.
[118] Mertcan, *Türk Modernleşmesinde Arap Aleviler,* 107.

opportunities in the government sector for Nusayri youngsters who successfully completed their education.[119]

As previously mentioned, the project of *tashih-i itikad* is directly related to the centralization efforts during the late Ottoman period and the goal of establishing central authority throughout the empire's borders. During this process, where the empire's subjects were to be transformed into citizens, it was also intended that these citizens become loyal and useful individuals to the state's official ideology, the "fatherland," and the sultan. Therefore, the "heterodox" beliefs, seen as obstacles to this loyalty, needed to be indoctrinated and assimilated into the Sunni/Hanafi sect. On the other hand, this policy of "correcting beliefs" was dominated by an understanding beyond traditional theological debates that the interpretation of Islam by *Ehl-i Sünnet* was the only true one. In this context, the discourse of "civilizing" constitutes one of the predominant themes in the relevant documents. Regions and communities considered "far from civilization" were to be civilized by the state. This issue is linked to the state's aim to establish its authority in every region, raise citizens loyal to the state and the sultan, strengthen the army with faithful soldiers, and resolve structures like nomadism, which were seen as "incompatible with civilization," thereby increasing economic production.

The connection between the *tashih-i itikad* project during the Hamidian period and the modernization process and discourse of the preceding period can be observed in this context. The reforms of the Tanzimat period aimed to achieve administrative centralization even in the remote corners of the Empire. For instance, from 1850 onwards, establishing central authority in Northern Albania and bringing the tribes in the region and the Montenegrin border under control were significant

[119] Mertcan, *Türk Modernleşmesinde Arap Aleviler,* 110.

agenda items. In a memorandum written in 1851, Ömer Lütfi Pasha, the commander of the Rumeli Army, stated that Shkodra should not be an exception among the provinces of the Empire and should benefit from the blessings of the Tanzimat; however, he added that for this purpose, the population of Northern Albania needed to undergo a "wholesome *terbiye*," ("chastisement, education").[120]

This "civilizing mission" occupied a position beyond merely sectarian policies, although it included them as well. This can be observed in both Tanzimat and Abdulhamid II period policies concerning Northern Albania, a region with complex ethno-sectarian dynamics. Similar to Ömer Lütfi Pasha's memorandum, in 1861, Raşid Pasha, the mutasarrıf of Shkodra, warned the tribes on the Ottoman side about the practice of the mountain tribes (including Montenegrins) of beheading enemies and placing their heads on stakes with the following statement: "…to retaliate such a comportment on the same level would mean to show the same level of inhumanity and would not correspond to the obligations of the sharia and the sublime compassion of the Ottoman state."[121] As seen in this example, the aim of "bringing civilization from the developed center to the wild mountain tribes" was frequently articulated.

As in other regions and communities, the "civilizing mission" during the reign of Abdulhamid II also took on a more Islamic tone here. With the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, Christian nations in the Balkans began to be protected by Western states, Christian schools proliferated in the region, and the influence of European powers on local communities increased.[122] The Ottoman administration, struggling to maintain military and economic control in the region, also feared losing the loyalty of the

[120] Reinkowski, "Double Struggle, No Income: Ottoman Borderlands in Northern Albania," 248-249.
[121] Reinkowski, "Double Struggle, No Income: Ottoman Borderlands in Northern Albania," 242-243.
[122] Blumi, *Rethinking Late Ottoman Empire*, 159.

predominantly Muslim population.[123] However, it can be said that a policy was planned based on geographic and social structures rather than a sectarian "concern" in this context. Northern Albania had a tribal-based organizational structure and had not been directly loyal to central authority until the nineteenth century.[124] In the region where unwritten tribal rules prevailed, administrative, financial, military, and legal control could not be established.[125] Here, establishing control over the mountain tribes, who were far from the central administration, or "civilization," and thus "civilizing" them, was of critical importance to the state.

The broader scope of this policy, surpassing purely sectarian goals such as the promotion of Sunnism, can be understood from the region's sectarian composition. The tribes in Northern Albania consisted of Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians.[126] Indeed, although this civilizing mission had an Islamic aspect, the main objective was the "correction of belief" for any group, whether Sunni or not, whose loyalty and obedience were questionable. The example of Northern Albania is useful for analyzing the connection between "civilizing" and "correcting belief," that is, *tashih-i itikad*.

In addition to the goal of Sunnitization of non-Sunni Muslim communities, Tashih-i İtikad was also a project aimed at enforcing a government-defined interpretation of religion on the general population. For instance, the archival documents highlighted the importance of educating people who, despite not being part of non-Sunni groups, "lacked sufficient knowledge about their religion" and "lived in a state of ignorance." The primary initiatives suggested for these groups include the establishment of schools and mosques and the sending of preachers and

[123] Blumi, *Rethinking Late Ottoman Empire*, 159-160.
[124] Özcan, *Osmanlı-Karadağ Siyasi İlişkileri*, 323.
[125] Özcan, *Osmanlı-Karadağ Siyasi İlişkileri,* 323.
[126] Blumi, *Rethinking Late Ottoman Empire,* 162.

instructors. Even though the suggestions may be identical or similar, they can nevertheless differ depending on the specific cases. These distinctions are crucial in illuminating the late Ottoman Empire's association with non-Sunni groups. In this context, the goal of "correcting beliefs," which can be defined as "rural or folk Islam," even among communities that are essentially Sunni, can be seen as an effort by the center to impose its ideology on all "citizens" of the empire.

This thesis is to argue that even though the *tashih-i itikad* policy was aimed to be constructed as an official policy by the Hamidian regime in the last decade of the nineteenth century, instead there were *tashih-i itikad* "policies" which differ both all "heterodox" groups and also according to different dynamics within one single group. In addition, while it was expressed a shared discourse and proposed solutions for each non-Sunni community for this policy systematized within the title of *tashih-i itikad* in the archival documents, their scope, the strictness of plans and rigor in their implementation vary according to these different dynamics. In this context, in order to provide a framework for the *tashih-i itikad* project, it is essential to analyze both the different communities in which it was implemented and the internal dynamics inside each group.

The groups that are being targeted for the process of Sunnitization through *tashih-i itikad* have diverse linguistic, ethno-religious, and socio-economic characteristics across a vast geographical area. Consequently, it is unreasonable to anticipate that the state will adopt the identical approach under the label of "non-Sunni." The implementation of this policy is influenced by several factors, including the presence of an established religious structure that derives its authority from orthodox sharia (even if it is not Sunnism), the community's distance from the center of the Empire, its tribal structure, and the level of perceived threat. Equally

significant is the level of resistance or receptiveness to assimilation exhibited by the populations that these strategies aim to impact. These differences also establish the boundaries of integration and the resolution of the issue through negotiation for the groups specifically targeted by the *tashih-i itikad* policies. In pursuit of this objective, this thesis will examine the policies pertaining to the Kızılbaş community in Anatolia in the second chapter and the policies concerning the Shiite population in Iraq in the third chapter. In these two chapters, the investigation is primarily dependent on archive materials. Furthermore, the examination of the *tashih-i itikad* policies towards Zaydis and Nusayris, previously mentioned in the introduction, holds significant relevance for this analysis.

Finally, it is beneficial to address why this thesis examines the policies towards the Shiites alongside the Kızılbaş. In both the pre-modern period and the nineteenth century, the state's legitimacy was based on Sunni Islam. In the *millet* system, where Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities had official status, sectarian communities within Islam but outside of Sunnism were not legally recognized. Among these groups, the Kızılbaş and the Shiites were the two most populous, spread across wide geographical regions, and seen as internal threats in the protracted struggle between Shiite Iran and the Sunni Ottoman Empire.

Despite being two distinct sectarian groups, there are overlapping terms used in the documents to describe these communities. Theologically, the pejorative term "Rafizi," used against Twelver Shiism, was also applied to Kızılbaş groups in Anatolia. This term, which also implied rebellion and insurrection, continued to be one of the descriptions of the Kızılbaş even in the late Ottoman period. Teber notes that in the Ottoman Empire, the term "Rafizi" was used more as a political term against groups susceptible to Safavid propaganda rather than for its religious

content.[127] Essentially, the term Kızılbaş began to be used in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries for communities spread over a wide area in Anatolia, characterized by an 'Ali-centered' and *gayr-i müteşerri* religious understanding.[128] However, from the state's perspective, this term, like "Rafizi," was used to describe a politically "dangerous" condition. For example, Imami Shiite communities in Syria and Lebanon were sometimes labeled as "Kızılbaş" to denote their unreliability.[129]

The policy of *tashih-i itikad* targeted many non-Sunni groups. However, in this thesis, the strategic and pragmatic diversity of the tashih-i itikad policy is primarily analyzed through the policies directed at the Kızılbaş in Anatolia and the Shiites in Iraq. The preference of choosing these two groups was influenced by factors such as being two different groups, one of them based on "Sharia" and the other *gayr-i müteşerri* principles, having large populations in different geographical areas, being perceived as internal threats over centuries, and having ethno-linguistic and social structural differences.

[127] Teber, "Osmanlı Belgelerinde Alevilik İçin Kullanılan Dini-Siyasi Tanımlamalar," 72-73.
[128] Yıldırım, *Aleviliğin Doğuşu*, 19-47.
[129] Weber, "Suriyeli Kızılbaşlar ve Osmanlı Şiiliği."

CHAPTER 2

THE KIZILBAŞ "QUESTION" IN ANATOLIA IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY

Since the late nineteenth century, the official approach of the Ottoman Empire towards its Kızılbaş population in Anatolia had shifted to a more assimilative way in contrast to the earlier path, which was mainly an exclusive policy that had been centered on the neglection. This change might be interpreted as stemming from the structural reason, which was the nation-making processes of the empires. In connection with this general pattern, the Ottoman government felt the need to identify and assimilate the Empire's traditionally "unidentified" groups, such as the Kızılbaş, Yezidis, Nusayris, and so on, especially due to the "exploration" of these groups by the Western missionaries since the beginning of 1850s.[130]

This chapter aims to analyze the Kızılbaş policy of the Ottoman Empire during the late nineteenth century, especially during the reign of Abdülhamid II; therefore, the archival documents[131] are the main focal point to scrutinize the relationship of the government and local officers with the Kızılbaş population in Central and Eastern part of Anatolia. In this context, this chapter has three subchapters in accordance with the main themes of the documents. First, it can be observed in the documents that some local officials and local Sunni notables have tried to describe the Alevi/Kızılbaş people's beliefs, traditions, way of life, and relations with the Sunni population. In this theme, there was a noticeable difference with the earlier type of denunciation of Alevism; in this instance, the documents have

[130] For a detailed information about the missionaries' "discovery" of the Kızılbaş, See; Kieser, *Iskalanmış Barış*, 102-106.

[131] The archival documents in this chapter have been studied in other works, especially in Yalçın Çakmak's book, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları: II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Alevi Algısı ve Siyaseti*. However, in order to analyze the policies of tashih-i itikad and different approaches towards various non-Sunni groups, some documents have been thoroughly examined as primary sources.

tried to construe the roots of Kızılbaş "heresy" in order to put it to the "righteous" path of (Sunni) Islam. Secondly, it is discussed in the documents the potential threats of the Kızılbaş as a possible alliance with the "Armenian plot" and the effects of Protestant missionaries on the "ignorant" Kızılbaş population. Last but not least, one of the main themes of the documents is the solutions to the Kızılbaş "question" by assimilating them into the Sunni/Hanafi branch of Islam, which was also aimed to establish an identity of "Muslimness" as the proper citizenship of the Empire.

The reports and documents in the first two sections of this chapter primarily pertained to the Kızılbaş faith and were predominantly produced by bureaucrats in Central Anatolian cities such as Sivas, Tokat, and Yozgat. Most of the documents were authored in the 1890s. During the Armenian massacres of 1894-1896, there was a notable increase in the quantity of documents addressing the perceived "threat" posed by the Kızılbaş in this region. These assessments consider even little conflicts or acts of banditry in villages as a possible danger to the state's security.

On the other hand, the Dersim region, in which the Ottoman government had faced difficulties establishing central authority for a long time, had attracted the state's attention earlier. Despite the concentration of records during the development of the *tashih-i itikad* project into an official state policy, it is essential to note that there are differences between the Dersim region and the places mentioned in the previous paragraph, based on the details in the reports and the implementation efforts. The letter issued from the Grand Vizier's Office to the governors of Ankara, Sivas, Erzurum, and Mamuretülaziz, as well as the governors' responses to this letter, are examined in the final section of this chapter. Out of all the responses, the governor of Mamuretülaziz's reply from 1903 regarding the influence of education and guidance in "the correction of the beliefs" of the Kızılbaş is one of the most

comprehensive reports on the subject. The fact that the governor's starting point was the Kızılbaş of Dersim in his report can also be understood within this framework. Ultimately, the motivations behind the *tashih-i itikad* strategy and its implementation cannot be reduced to a mere attempt to "Sunnitization the Kızılbaş." It is necessary to analyze the various dynamics of the Kızılbaş communities in this particular environment.

2.1 The description of the Kızılbaş people in the official documents

In this part, it will be analyzed the description of the Kızılbaş people and their beliefs in two official documents that were written in 1894 and 1899. The first document consists of two parts. The first was sent to the governor of Ankara, Mehmed Memduh Paşa, by Abdülcabbarzade Osman, a local notable in Yozgat. The second part of the document is the comments of Memduh Paşa on Abdülcabbarzade Osman's letter. Memduh Paşa sent this report to the central government by attaching the abovementioned letter. The brief abstract of this report is that the Kızılbaş and Armenians pose a danger to Muslims, and it is a vital necessity to take urgent precautions against it. The second document was written in 1899 by Bekir Sıdkı, the governor of Tokat. Even though both documents contain other aspects of the subject, such as threats and solutions, it will be only analyzed the theme of the description of the Kızılbaş, and other elements in these documents will be handled in the related subtitles.

2.1.1 The report of Mehmed Memduh Paşa

The first part of the report is a letter sent to Memduh Paşa by Abdülcabbarzade Osman. In this letter, Osman begins by explaining the danger of the Kızılbaş for Sunnis. Then, he expounds his thesis by exemplifying their relations with Armenians, the accusation of being against Islamic duties, and the description of the *cem* ritual. He also categorises Alevis' sub-groups to inform of their communities around Yozgat.

Abdülcabbarzade Osman begins his letter with "the attitudes and paths[132] of the "*Revâfız"*[133], that is, a herd of vicious which is called Kızılbaş living in the districts and villages within Yozgat are described below as a duty.[134] Then he stated that "the Kızılbaş considers betraying Sunnis at every opportunity and in every way as their one of the most honorable duties. They use the term "Yezid" for Muslims. If a Sunni pays a visit to their houses, they commit treason, like making the chicken unclean and spitting on it to serve their Muslim guest. The precedents of these events have been seen many times."[135] As can be observed in other documents about the Kızılbaş, Abdülcabbarzade Osman started his letter by emphasizing the postulate that the Kızılbaş are a threat both for the Empire and the society.

After he highlighted the "hatred" of the Kızılbaş against the (Sunni) Muslim population, he explained the so-called close relationship between the Kızılbaş and Armenians in order to strengthen his argument regarding the hazard of the Kızılbaş. He writes that "it is publicly known that they [the Kızılbaş] have the same path and ideas as the Armenians, and only their names are Muslim, and their path is

---

[132] In archival documents about Alevi beliefs, the doctrine of Alevism was mostly described as "*meslek*" which means both path and occupation.
[133] "*Revâfiz* is the plural form of *Rafizi*, or Rafidhi. Even though the origin of the term is disputable in terms of the position of the pro-Alid proto-Imamiyya groups, the term has been pejoratively used for Shiite sects that refused the caliphate of Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, and Uthman ibn al-Affan. See Kohlberg, "The Encyclopaedia of Islam," 386-389.
[134] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.
[135] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.

completely contrary to the holy Sharia and Islam."[136] According to his narrative, the Kızılbaş participated in Armenian festivals, such as Easter, by dressing in new clothes and greeting them. Even they prepared and painted the Easter eggs with Armenians. Apart from these alleged common religious practices, Abdülcabbarzade Osman's clues for the Kızılbaş and Armenian affinity are the interactions in the daily life of these two communities. According to him, the Kızılbaş and Armenians familiarly visit each other's houses. The Kızılbaş approach their Armenian guests as if they are their own relatives. What is the most gruesome for Abdülcabbarzade Osman is that they disregard the rule of "*haremlik-selamlık,*" which means the rule of sitting separately between men and women. The Kızılbaş women serve Armenians as if they are their relatives. He concluded the allegation of the affinity between the Kızılbaş and Armenians with an analogy of "onion skin", which he claims that it is the Kızılbaş's own expression. According to Abdulcabbarzade Osman, "the Kızılbaş claim that God incarnated in the form of Jesus before; then, incarnated in the form of Ali ibn Abu Talib. Because of this reason, there is a curtain like an onion skin between Armenians and us. If this curtain disappears, we could be described as Armenian."[137]

Another theme of the letter regarding the description of the Kızılbaş is the emphasis on contradicting orthodox Islam (being "*gayri-müteşerri*") by the way of dehumanization of the Kızılbaş. Abdülcabbarzade Osman stated that "they do not possess and not perform the divine commandments, such as "wudu, ghusl, prayer, fasting, and the conservation of honor and purity. They also do not have any

[136] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.
[137] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.

stimulation and life purpose but eating, drinking, and sensual aspiration like quadruped animals."[138]

After the abovementioned emphasis on the Kızılbaş's distance from the "true" Islam and even humanity, he categorized the Kızılbaş groups within Yozgat. According to Abdülcabbarzade Osman, even though it is stated that the Kızılbaş divided into twelve fractions, there are three Kızılbaş sub-groups within Yozgat, which are Hubyarlı, Harbendelü, and Erdebillü. Then, he briefly described these three groups and their doctrines and differences. "The Hubyarlı community, which is also called Sıraç and Beğdilli, has followed the tekke of Hubyar within Sivas. On the other hand, they accepted Ayşe Kadın as the leader, who has appeared in the district of Zile for a few years. Today, the vast majority of the Sıraç community is subject to the aforementioned Ayşe Kadın."[139]

The second group that Abdülcabbarzade described is the Harbendelü community. "They are subject to Cemaleddin Efendi, who claims to be a descendant of Hacı Bektaş-i Veli. They do not respect *dede*s, and the rituals of *cem* are performed by the dervishes who come from the tekke of Hacı Bektaş." He also indicated that "the Turkish word for this thing called "*cem*" is "*dernek*."[140][141]

The last group is the Erdebillü community. In contrast with the Harbendelü, "this community performed the *cem* ritual under the guidance of *dede*s. Even though if a dervish from Hacı Bektaş comes during the ritual, they treat these dervishes as ordinary people until the end of the *cem*."[142]

---

[138] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.
[139] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.
[140] Even though the most common usage of this word, *dernek*, means association in modern Turkish, it also has other meanings, such as assembly, council and so on. However, in this context, it is pejoratively used in the meaning of "jollification." See http://lugatim.com/s/dernek.
[141] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.
[142] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.

The last part of Abdülcabbarzade Osman's letter is a description of the *cem* ritual. "The ritual of apostasy, which is called *cem*, is performed from the end of December to the twenty-first of March. Men and women gather in a house every night. Men kiss the knee, and the women kiss the palm of the person called *dede*. Then, the women line up on one side and the men on the other. After that, the *dede* starts to play *saz*, a stringed instrument, and sing meaningless folk songs. In the meantime, wine glasses are brought by girls, and when they are warmed up, they dance until the morning on those long nights. Eventually, they all get drunk and pass out. In that case, it is needless to describe the evil that would follow. This is what we have described in what they call the ritual of *cem*. They even call it to worship according to their heretic faith."[143]

Abdülcabbarzade Osman concluded his letter by intensifying emphasis on the criticality of the situation. He described these rituals in-depth; on the other hand, he also stated that the Kızılbaş perform these rituals in secret. He claimed that if a Sunni unknowingly comes across the place where the Kızılbaş perform the *cem*, they kill that person and lose his corpse by saying that a sacrifice has come." His last statement is "the precedents of such events have happened and have seen many times."[144]

The letter that was explained above was attached to the report by Mehmed Memduh Paşa, the governor of Ankara, and he clarified and interpreted the letter. Even though the contents of both texts are almost similar, it can be observed that Mehmed Memduh Paşa has more focused on the governmental aspects of the subject, and he had a more formal language and way of expression. The report has four main points, which are the emphasis on the incompatibility of the "heretic" Kızılbaş belief

[143] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.
[144] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.

with (Sunni) Islam, the close relationship between the Kızılbaş and Armenians, the immediate precautions against the Kızılbaş problem, and in conjunction with this, a possibility of the Kızılbaş's mass conversion to Shiism.

Mehmed Memduh Paşa started his report by stating that "there is a group of people in Anatolia known as the Kızılbaş who, in the darkness of ignorance and on the steep paths of heresy, have completely abandoned Islam and have nothing left to prove that they are Muslims except their names. Even if they declare themselves as Muslims, they consider all of the harams to be halal."[145]

The second point of Mehmed Memduh Paşa regarding the Kızılbaş "danger" is the fact that the Kızılbaş have a strong and peaceful relationship with Christians, especially Armenians. According to Memduh Paşa, "it is a commonly known fact that the Kızılbaş have a close connection with Christians while they approach (Sunni) Muslims hostilely. They go on the booze with Armenians in secret, and their wives also participate in these activities."[146] In addition to the emphasis on the alleged close relations with Armenians, Mehmed Memduh Paşa attracted attention to the danger of the situation for the state's security. He stated it is also proven by the martial courts that the Kızılbaş's help and support for the Armenian plot."[147] As distinct from the letter of Abdülcabbarzade Osman, the primary motivation of Mehmed Memduh Paşa is the necessary precautions against the "Kızılbaş problem" rather than emphasizing how the Kızılbaş are heretics. Therefore, Mehmed Memduh Paşa proposed his suggestions, mainly the establishment of schools and mosques in the Kızılbaş villages. Lastly, he stated that the Kızılbaş have a massive population not only in Ankara but also in lots of villages successively up to the Iran border,

[145] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.
[146] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.
[147] BOA, Y.PRK. UM. 29/77.

especially in the Vilayet of Sivas. At the end of the report, he mentioned a hypothetical possibility that if Iranian clerics and consuls conduct Shiitization activities, in this situation, the theological problem might transform into a political crisis for the Ottoman Empire.

2.1.2 The report of Bekir Sıdkı Bey

The document[148] consists of several reports and correspondences between the vilayets that were attached to the report of Bekir Sıdkı Bey, the governor of Tokat, in 1899. Bekir Sıdkı Bey indicated that "he has a curiosity regarding the faith and traditions of the local people where he holds in official service, and he accepted it as the most substantial mission." In this context, Bekir Sıdkı stated that he had investigated the people, who are called Kızılbaş and Alevi in Anatolia, while wondering about their faith, "wrong" traditions, and obstinacy for twenty years."[149] According to Bekir Sıdkı, "even if they claim to be followers of the Bektaşi order ["*Tarîk-i Nâzenîn*], their situation causes that the Muslims and the patriots of the Empire are overwhelmed with agony and torment."[150] Bekir Sıdkı Bey described the Kızılbaş and their "heresy" on the ground of the position of *dede*s, the *cem* rituals, the relationship with Armenians, and the dangerous faith and traditions of the Kızılbaş for the State. Differently from the previous document, Bekir Sıdkı paid more attention to the *dede*s and their role in the Kızılbaş society. To Bekir Sıdkı, "the *dede*s are the main reason to distort the Kızılbaş people by guidance erroneously through utilizing their complete ignorance."[151] After that, he listed several expressions that he claimed the *dede*s stated.

[148] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.
[149] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.
[150] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.
[151] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.

According to his narrative, the *dede*s argue that "they [the *dede*s] were created from the heavenly light while the others were created from soil." They also claim that "Allah appointed us over you as the deputy." "They hold a wand ["*değnek*"] in their hands for pilgrimage, claiming that it is from God and that those who pass under it and drink its water will not go to hell but go straight to paradise."[152] Bekir Sıdkı Bey also explained the position of the *dede*s among the Kızılbaş society from the aspects of both social and religious life. He claimed that these *dede*s circuit the Kızılbaş villages to perform *cem* rituals for three months during the winter. He narrates that "the *dede*, sitting on three mattresses in the corner of the room of a house, says that those who adhere to the sharia is wrong. Even though we consider the sultan ostensibly as our earthly sultan, we are your sultans in the spiritual sense, and the divine knowledge is in our power. They bring men and women to the divan one by one and make them accept that they [the *dede*s] are from the Hak. In this manner, they take their testimony and make them renounce their religion."[153] Then, Bekir Sıdkı Bey describes the *cem* ritual. After the abovementioned ceremonies, "they bring a *saz*, a stringed instrument, and the *dede* exposes some nonsensical phrases. They become ready to show respect to the wand. After that, the *dede* says that we [the Kızılbaş] are the genuine creatures of God, and the other nations deserve hell. Heaven has been created for us, and hell has been created for the others."[154] "Then, the *dede* demands a provision because of the fact that he sanctified the community and pardoned their sins." Bekir Sıdkı claimed that "they became pleasant that we are freed from our sins, and they pay the *dede* from 150 *kuruş* to 200 *kuruş* according to their financial situation."[155]

[152] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.
[153] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.
[154] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.
[155] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.

After explaining the "corruptions" of *dede*s, Bekir Sıdkı mentioned the "problems" of the Kızılbaş community. Bekir Sıdkı, like other officials, handles the religious "heresy" of the Kızılbaş community in conjunction with their disloyalty to the Ottoman Empire. At first, he mentioned that the Kızılbaş humiliate the companions of the Prophet, *sahabe*, which can be accounted for as the most distinctive feature between the Sunni and Shiite sects. Then, he points out that the Kızılbaş withhold their children from enlisting in school due to the fact that the children may turn away from the Kızılbaş faith if they get educated according to the "true" Islamic faith in the schools. Besides education, they also avoid joining the army because of the fact that they do not want to serve in the Islamic army. He claims that they try to escape the army, and if they cannot, they indoctrinate to malpractice intentionally. The third aspect of their "malignancy" is to avoid paying taxes. "When they pay taxes, they maledict that the tax would be infertile and worthless."[156]

Like the previous document, one of the most distinctive points of Bekir Sıdkı is that the only Islamic feature of the Kızılbaş is their names. Apart from the lack of commitment to the orthodox Islamic doctrine, he also emphasizes the distant relationship between the Kızılbaş and the (Sunni) Muslim population. He claims that the Kızılbaş do not absolutely accept Muslims as guests in their village, and if a Muslim goes to their village and coincides with the ritual, *dernek*, they deceive this person. To Bekir Sıdkı, what is more dangerous is that they not only avoid interacting with Muslims at the highest stage but also have a very intimate relationship with non-Muslims, especially with Armenians. They have sympathy and affection for Armenians as if they are co-religionists. Even it is also proven that Armenians freely

[156] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.

visit the Kızılbaş's houses and communicate with their wives, while they abstain from the same connection with (Sunni) Muslims.

Lastly, Bekir Sıdkı evaluates the Kızılbaş community in order to determine the extent of the "problem." "In the Kızılbaş population and their villages, it is totally absent any pure and clean person. Even though some Kızılbaş villages have a mosque and school, there is no single person to pray. And even some of them send their children to school; it is a trick to escape the army. When a child passes the draft age, he immediately leaves school and becomes to be busy with his parents' occupation, which is woodchopping and coal-dealing. They also produce alcohol and sell those products to non-Muslims."[157] The remaining body of the document is the emphasis that the government has to take precautions against the Kızılbaş "question," which will be scrutinized in the next sub-chapter.

2.1.3 Evaluation

The official documents regarding the Kızılbaş community, which handled the subject as a problem that has to be solved, mostly appeared during the last decade of the nineteenth century. It does not mean, of course, that the phenomenon of the Kızılbaş problem was peculiar to the late Ottoman Empire. Quiet contrarily, the subject of "heresy of the Kızılbaş" has been discussed as a problem for the "state's security" since the beginning of the Ottoman and Safavid rivalry during the sixteenth century. On the other hand, the context of the subject in the nineteenth century has to be analyzed within the modernization and nation-making process of the Ottoman Empire.

[157] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.

The most distinctive feature between the documents in the early modern period and the nineteenth century is that there was an apparent aim to describe the beliefs, traditions and lifestyle of the Kızılbaş people in the latter. During very early appearance of the so-called Kızılbaş Question in the early modern era, the official documents even did not denominate; rather, the documents described these communities as "profane, Rafidhi, Shiite, apostate."[158] In the course of the following centuries, the term Kızılbaş has been used to describe these Ali-centered "heterodox" communities in conjunction with the emphasis on their alleged ties with Safavid Iran. According to Teber, the term Kızılbaş was adopted for these communities on account of the fact that they collaborated with Shah Ismail I because the term was also used for the soldiers of Ismail I.[159]

In two documents that are explained, the reports of Mehmed Memduh Paşa and Bekir Sıdkı Bey, the most used term for this community is Kızılbaş. This denomination can be observed in other documents in the same period about this subject that are studied in the thesis. Similarly, other pejorative terms have been still using in both these two documents and others, such as apostate, Rafidhi, those who have superstitious beliefs, ignorant and so on ("*mülhid*, *Râfizi* or *Revâfız*, *gürûh-ı dalle*, *i'tikâd-ı bâtıla*, *câhil*, *nâdân*"). On the other hand, the abovementioned denominations should be analyzed in the context of the modernization process of the late Ottoman Empire along with the counter-missionary policies and the policy of "the correction of the creed," *tashih-i itikad*, of Abdülhamid II.

First, in the documents, except the letter of Abdülcabbarzade Osman, the central theme is to point out the potential danger of the Kızılbaş, and their

[158] Melikoff, "Bektaşilik/Kızılbaşlık: Tarihsel Bölünme ve Sonuçları," 8.
[159] Teber, "Osmanlı Belgelerinde Alevilik İçin Kullanılan Dini-Siyasi Tanımlamalar," 71.

"superstitious" beliefs and traditions are interpreted as the reasons why they "went astray." The critical point is that the main focus of the documents is to determine the roots of "heresy" and "ignorance" that might cause an enormous danger for the Empire. The documents did not just aim to label the Kızılbaş as heretics or enemies of the State; instead, it is aimed to find answers regarding the identity of the Kızılbaş, their beliefs and traditions, their potential threats, their "ignorance", and the solution.

Even though these aspects are mentioned in an interwoven way, the essential factor for the officials is the Kızılbaş's "heresy" due to the fact that their religious doctrine and traditions contradict the faith of orthodox Sunni Islam. This perception, in essence, led to the idea that the Kızılbaş are accessible for any provocation, aberration and collaboration with the Empire's "enemy", especially Armenians and the Protestant missionaries. Therefore, the main motive is an analysis of a "heretic" population living in many parts of Anatolia in order to assimilate them into a unique religious identity, Sunni Islam, rather than only labeling the community as "heretic."

In both documents of Mehmed Memduh Paşa and Bekir Sıdkı Bey, *dede*s constitute a major threat and diverter role by exploiting the community financially, religiously and socially by utilizing their "complete ignorance." In the description of religious rituals and ceremonies, *dede*s also occupy a significant role in terms of performing the ceremonies and deceiving the Kızılbaş villagers. Another emphasis is the pagan elements in the Kızılbaş traditions and practices. It is claimed that the Kızılbaş worship the "holy" wand, *değnek*, and also some stones and trees around their villages. It is also frequently emphasized that the Kızılbaş deny the essential duties of Islam. According to the documents, "they do not pray, do not fast; they produce, consume and sell alcohol, and they do not conform to the rule of "*haremlik-selamlık*," sitting men and women separately."

Another theme in conjunction with a non-religious lifestyle is the close relationship between the Kızılbaş community and non-Muslims, especially Armenians, and a remote approach or "hatred" to (Sunni) Muslims. Both documents repeatedly emphasized the danger of a possible Kızılbaş and Armenian alliance or the Kızılbaş's participation in the Armenian "plot." In this context, the strongest argument of the documents is that the Kızılbaş are available for the Armenian and missionaries' intrigue due to the fact that they are in complete ignorance in terms of both religion and civilization. The close relationship between the Kızılbaş and Armenians in rural Anatolia is also asserted to prove that the Kızılbaş do not have an intimate tie with the Ottoman Empire and its fundamental citizens, (Sunni) Muslims. On the other side, the remote relationship with Sunnis is also repeatedly mentioned to assert the Kızılbaş's affinity with Armenians. Insomuch that, it is argued that the Kızılbaş have a well-known habit that if a Muslim coincides with their ritual, they kill this person.

Lastly, it is significant to consider why these documents are produced. In this context, it should be noted that the description of the Kızılbaş people, their faith and traditions, and their social interactions have been used in order to draw attention to state security. Therefore, the conclusions of the documents are to propose some solutions to solve this problem, mainly related to the importance of education. It is also noticeable in terms of the role of Ottoman bureaucracy that the letter of Abdülcabbarzade Osman, a local notable in Yozgat, does not contain any solution offered; instead, the letter is only about the Kızılbaş's "perversion" and "heresy". On the other hand, both two bureaucrats, Mehmed Memduh and Bekir Sıdkı, have the aim to propose a concrete policy in order to homogenize Anatolia by means of assimilating "heterodox" communities, to begin with the Kızılbaş.

2.2 “Possible threats:” the relationship with Armenians and Protestant missionaries

As indicated in the previous part, the Ottoman government considered describing and assimilating the Kızılbaş population on account of the fact that their “superstitious faith” might potentially cause a threat to the state’s security. In this context, the Armenian “plot” was the most noticeable threat to the government officials who produced the subject-related documents. The second most significant threat was the Christian missionaries, especially Protestants, and Western consulates, which were seen as troublemakers that provoked both the Kızılbaş and Armenians through missionary activities. In other respects, some officials called attention to another threat. For example, Mehmed Memduh claimed that it might be possible that if the Iranian clerics and consuls propagandize the Shia faith among the Kızılbaş, whose population spread from Ankara to the Iranian border, the Kızılbaş “Question” might transform into a highly risked political crisis for the Ottoman government. Notwithstanding, this theme, the possibility of Iran’s influence, is slightly mentioned. The focal point of the documents regarding the unreliableness of the Kızılbaş is their relations with Armenians and Christian missionaries.

2.2.1 “Foreign threats:” missionaries and Western consuls

Western powers and Christian missions have been approached by the Ottoman government as enemies to provoke the ethno-religious communities against the Empire. In this context, it can be observed that there are three groups according to their “dangerousness:” the missionaries, Armenians and the Kızılbaş, respectively. According to the most common official narrative in the Ottoman archival documents

is that the main source of the Armenian "plots" are the Protestant and Jesuit missionaries.[160]

The discovery of the Kızılbaş by Western missionaries and travelers led the Ottoman government to develop a new approach towards non-Sunni groups, which it had not defined separately with the millet system but accepted under the Muslim identity. The Kızılbaş, who had a significant population in Anatolia, constituted one of the most important of these groups. For the first time, missionaries and Western travelers attempted to develop a relatively objective narrative of Alevi/Kızılbaş communities. Although most of the content produced about the Kızılbaş included the views of the Ottoman Empire and the Sunni majority, as well as the views of Armenians, the lives of the Kızılbaş were observed and their beliefs and traditions were described in their own expressions.

The official documents concentrated on the possibility of the conversion of the Kızılbaş people to Protestantism due to the fact that "they are living in complete ignorance, and they do not have the true Islamic faith." Because of this reason, every rumor regarding the possibility of conversion has been taken seriously, and investigations have been carried out. One of the important examples on this subject is a document containing correspondence between the inspector Şakir Paşa, Bekir Sıdkı Bey, the governor of Tokat, and the governor of Mamuretülaziz. The second part of the document, which was written by Bekir Sıdkı Bey, was explained under the 2.1. title of this thesis, which was about the description of the Kızılbaş people by Ottoman officials.

The document states that there is a report that Alevis living in Dersim, Akçadağ, Erguvan, and partially in Hekimhan are inclined to convert to

[160] BOA, Y.PRK.DH. 8/6.

Protestantism, and there is a strong surmise that the foreign missionaries are the main perpetrators of this situation. It is noteworthy that even if the veracity of this allegation is doubtful, it can never go uninvestigated due to the enormous significance of the subject. The matters to be investigated are as follows: if there is any truth to the allegations regarding the Christianization tendency of the Kızılbaş, is the source of this tendency foreign missionaries, local clergy and priests, or some malicious local people? As the result of the investigation, it was stated that there was no inclination towards Protestantism among the Alevis, the foreign missionaries were not present in the aforementioned places, and also local clergy and priests did not go to the villages and neighborhoods where Alevis resided. On the other hand, at the end of the document, it was strongly emphasized that the investigation will not absolutely be stopped for this subject.[161]

The state's policy of inspecting the faith of citizens was not limited to the "danger" of Christianization due to missionary activities. For instance, in a document dated in 1898, it was stated that "an ignorant community that is unaware of the requirements of Islam in Kiğı intermarried with the Kızılbaş of Dersim, and as a result, this situation may lead to convert to Alevism of this "ignorant" people. The document also mentioned some people who are claimed to be ignorant in terms of Islamic faith and doctrine in Bitlis and Sason, with the emphasizing of the danger of Christianization.[162] As a result, it was thought that groups, whether Sunni or Alevi, that did not have a sufficient understanding of Islam as defined by the state could be incited against the state by missionaries, foreign powers and Armenians, and the necessity of "correcting the beliefs" of these groups was repeatedly emphasized in order to solve this problem.

[161] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.
[162] BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 44/80.

In this context, claims and rumors regarding the interaction of missionaries with the Kızılbaş have been taken seriously and individually investigated. For example, in a document dated in 1893, it was stated that three children from an Alevi village in Malatya were prevented from receiving education in Latin and Catholic Armenian schools. On the other hand, it was detected that they continued to attend these schools in secret, and the document demanded that the relevant authorities have to prevent this "detrimental" situation.[163]

The government and local officials did not only investigate the Kızılbaş who attended the schools but also foreign schools and missionaries. There are two documents about this subject in 1894 and 1902, which both were related to Mehmed Memduh Paşa. First, an unnamed letter that was signed as "a patriot," "*muhibb-i vatan*, 1894 was sent from Sivas to Mehmed Memduh Paşa, the governor of Ankara. In the letter, it was claimed that there is a teacher in Sivas American College, "Hubert," who published and distributed a pamphlet regarding the curse on the "Rashidun," the first four caliphs, among the Kızılbaş in the villages of the district of Kangal near the vilayet of Sivas. According to the letter, these Kızılbaş refused to join the army by claiming that "we are Protestants" as a result of this propaganda."[164] The second example is also from Mehmed Memduh Paşa in 1902; however, he was the minister of internal affairs at this time. He sent a report to the Grand Vizier about the American consul in Mamuretülaziz, Mr. Sanders, and his translator, Mıgırdiçyan Tomas, who was also a Protestant preacher. According to him, it is understood that Mr. Sanders and Tomas traveled around Elbistan and Maraş, taking photographs of roads, collecting information about the sectarian structure and customs of the people,

[163] BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 28/70.
[164] BOA, Y. PRK.UM. 30/85.

and recording the population of Muslims belonging to the Alevi sect. Lastly, Memduh Paşa added that he commanded to investigate the situation in-depth.[165]

2.2.2 The relationship between Armenian and the Kızılbaş

In the documents, the emphasis on the "superstition" of the Kızılbaş faith and its deviation from the (Sunni) Islamic doctrine is basically related to the security concerns of the state. In this context, governmental documents paid more attention to the relationship between the Kızılbaş and Armenians than the Kızılbaş and missionaries' interaction.

First of all, the most emphasized and repeated point is the argument that there is a similarity in the beliefs and traditions of the Kızılbaş and Armenians. In these documents, the Kızılbaş were represented as sometimes "ignorant" and sometimes "traitors." The report of Bekir Sıdkı Bey, the governor of Amasya, in 1895 is an epitome of this approach towards the so-called Kızılbaş and Armenian relationship:

> The Kızılbaş people living in ignorance in the villages… are very allied with the Armenian nation, and trade and commerce only with Armenians. Since the Armenian nation is aware of their [Kızılbaş's] situation, they try to deceive them on various occasions. The bandits of the Armenian committee hide in the houses of the Kızılbaş in order to escape government pressure. The Armenians try to increase the hatred of the Kızılbaş against the Muslims by dictating the false idea that if the Kızılbaş allied with them, they will together defeat the Muslims. Since it is known that the Kızılbaş nation hates Muslims and considers burning a Muslim every year, whenever possible, to be an auspicious and fruitful deed... the political consequences of the involvement of this group, which is Muslim in name only but irreligious in spirit, in the Armenian issue will be severe.[166]

---

[165] BOA, HR.TH. 275/91.

[166] BOA, Y.MTV. 131/109. "…bu kavm-i zulmet-i cehl-i nâdânîde yaşamakda bulundukları anlaşılmışdır. Ve 'ale'l-husus bunlar Ermeni milletiyle gâyet müttefik olarak ahz u i'tâları dâima bunlarla edilmekde olduğu ve ahvâllerine millet-i Ermeniyân da vâkıf bulunduğu suretle dâire-i ittifâk-ı fesâda dâhil olmaları için vesâit-i mütenevvia' ile celbe çalışıldıkları ve Ermeni komite eşkiyâsı tazyîkât-ı hükûmet-i seniyye üzerine bu Kızılbaşların hânelerinde ihtifâ edilmekde oldukları ve Ermeniler de Kızılbaşların kendileriyle müttefik olub hîn-îcâbda bunlarla berâber ahâli-yi İslâm'a galebe çalacakları fikr-i bâtılasında bulunub bu yolda da şâyi'âta meydân vererek Kızılbaş milletini ahâli-i İslâm'dan daha ziyâde teneffür etdirmekde idikleri esâsen Kızılbaş milletinin ahâli-yi İslâm'a olan derece-i 'adâvetleri ma'lûm ve hattâ fırsat buldukca beher sene İslâm'dan birisini ateşle ihrâk eylemeyi kendileri için feyz ve berekete delâlet eder zu'âm-ı sakiminde oldukları da meczûm

After the claiming that the "superstitious beliefs and ignorance of the Kızılbaş" could lead them to fall prey to Armenian "provocation," there were a number of so-called "concrete" cases of alleged Kızılbaş and Armenian collaboration. In this context, five cases will be examined within seven documents. The first case is a "deposition" of a captured Armenian militant, Tomayan Artin, in 1894 in Merzifon. Tomayan Artin confessed that there are Kurds and the Kızılbaş who participate in the Armenian "plot" in Amasya and Merzifon. Not only Kurds and the Kızılbaş but even some Turks (Sunni Muslims) have a relationship with the Armenian revolutionaries. For example, Artin claimed that Hace Emin Efendi had a contact with Armenian organizations in order to publish a Turkish newspaper in London to attack the Ottoman government.[167] Another document that was written a month later declared that the allegations of Tomayan Artin were fabricated.[168] In this case, it can be observed that Tomayan Artin was probably forced to confess against the whole "enemies" of the government in a way that interconnect them.

The second case is an unsigned letter written in Turkish and found in the courtyard of a mosque in Merzifon. In the letter, it was stated that "Karatepeli Mehmed Ağa, a Kızılbaş, is offered by Armenians to slaughter Muslims. Mehmed Ağa eagerly accepts this offer and demands weapons from the Armenians. Then, he was declared a commander by the Armenians and started to recruit soldiers to prepare to participate in the upcoming Armenian rebellion. He honors the idols and takes an oath to fight against Muslims."[169] Similarly to the previous case, as a result

olduğundan ve şu ahvâl-i hâzıralar ile Ermeni efkâr ve hayâlât-ı bâtılasına sülükleri pek muhtemel bulunduğundan ehemmiyyeti vâreste-i arz bulunan Ermeni meselesine böyle ismen İslâm olub ma'nen bî-dîn bulunan kavmin iştirâk ve duhulü ne gibi mazâhir-i siyâsiyyesi intâc edeceğinden…"

[167] BOA, Y.PRK.DH. 7/48.

[168] BOA, Y. PRK.DH. 7/58.

[169] BOA, Y.MTV. 97/43.

of the investigation, it is stated that Karatepeli Mehmed Ağa was found to be innocent and that he was slandered due to a grudge against him.[170]

The third unsubstantiated case is a document from the exact date and the same region as the previous cases. In the document, it was claimed that a Kızılbaş named Kel İbrahim acted together with the Armenian militias who attacked the post office in 1894 in Tokat. According to the report, he was detained; however, he was released by the governor of Sivas, Halil Paşa.[171] The report was written by the governor of Ankara, Mehmed Memduh Paşa, and the aspect of the Kızılbaş "question" as a dispute among the Ottoman officials will be handled in the next part of the chapter.

The last two cases are from different regions, Akçadağ and Talori, near Maraş and Muş, respectively, even though they took place in the same period.[172] Even if there were concrete conflicts in both cases, their contents do not reflect a generalized Alevi/Kızılbaş and Armenian alliance, but rather individual banditry in the same geography and occasional clashes with the governmental forces. The number of individuals involved in these incidents is very limited, and although there are several provinces where Alevi and Armenian populations intersect geographically, there are very few examples of such incidents in which the Alevi/Kızılbaş and Armenian "bandits" cooperated. The fact that the documents frequently emphasize the possibility of the Kızılbaş and Armenian alliance due to their "superstitious faith," while concrete examples of cooperation are limited, begs the question: Was there really a Kızılbaş problem?

[170] BOA, DH.MKT. 247/34.
[171] BOA, DH.MKT. 286/47.
[172] BOA, Y.EE. 158/23. and BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 658/2.

2.2.3 The Kızılbaş "question" and competition among the governors

Even though it is obvious that the Kızılbaş question has become one of the important topics of the Ottoman government, on the other hand, it can be observed that a remarkable portion of the documents was centered on the rivalries and disputes between several state officials by utilizing the allegations against each other regarding the Kızılbaş and Armenian issues. In this subject, there were two main actors: Mehmed Memduh Paşa, the governor of Ankara and later, the minister of internal affairs, and Halil Paşa, the governor of Sivas. Although the dispute between Halil Paşa and Memduh Paşa was the dominant factor, there were several critical figures who were part of the subject, such as Bekir Sıdkı Bey and police chief Ömer Efendi.

If it would be grouped their approaches, Halil Paşa and the other three officials can be placed in relatively opposite positions with respect to the Kızılbaş and their relations with Armenians. Almost all of the documents claiming that "the Kızılbaş could not be trusted due to their "superstitious beliefs and ignorance," and that they had the potential to revolt by being in close contact with Armenians and allying with them were produced by the latter group, Memduh Paşa, Bekir Sıdkı Bey, and Ömer Efendi. Although some of these documents emphasized the Armenian Question and the potential threat of the Kızılbaş, in general, it was implied that Halil Paşa had a significant role in these problems.

Halil Paşa also had an approach that accepted the Kızılbaş as those who have "superstitious beliefs" and that they live in ignorance. On the other hand, he refused the argument that the Kızılbaş had already allied with Armenians to prepare for participating in an upcoming Armenian rebellion. In contrast, Halil Paşa argued that

the approach of his "rivals" might lead to transform this Kızılbaş problem into a political crisis.

The letters, reports, and documents that were written by Halil Paşa were mostly answers to the allegations against him, which were the accusations of tolerance towards Armenians and support for the Kızılbaş. It is noteworthy that most of these documents included "anonymous" letters against Halil Paşa. For example, Halil Paşa wrote a report about Ömer Efendi, a police commissioner in Ankara and one of Memduh Paşa's close associates, stating that his statements and actions sowed discord among Circassians and other Muslims and the Kızılbaş and that Memduh Paşa encouraged these actions. He also stated that Ömer Efendi instructed some Circassian notables to make false statements against Halil Paşa, and about the alliance between the Kızılbaş and Armenians.[173] Halil Paşa claimed that, in another report that was sent a couple of days later, Ömer Efendi had made false statements in order to wear him down with the instructions he had received from Memduh Paşa. He also emphasized that this approach could lead to sedition between the Kızılbaş and Circassians and that the Armenians might exploit this situation.[174]

Halil Paşa sent another report to the Yıldız Palace in which he expounded the abovementioned statements in 1894. Halil Paşa stated about some of Memduh Paşa's reports that "it is obvious that he fabricated something to add the Kızılbaş issue to the Armenian question."[175] He also defended himself by stating that "I would not forgive even my own parents, children and relatives for the interests of the Empire, let alone the Kızılbaş."[176] Then, he emphasized that it is an enormous irresponsibility to use

[173] BOA, Y.A.HUS. 308/107.
[174] BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 30/5.
[175] BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 30/54.
[176] BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 30/54.

this critical subject, the Armenian Question, for personal enmity, and it might jeopardize the state's security.[177]

The approaches of Memduh Paşa, Bekir Sıdkı Bey and Ömer Efendi show that there is a patronage network among the local bureaucracy, and the Kızılbaş have become an aspect of this rivalry. They frequently tried with exaggerated examples and testimonies from local notables that the Kızılbaş was a very hazardous community for the Empire and the Muslim population. It was also claimed that Halil Paşa contributed to this danger through both his "incompetence" and "lack of faith."[178] In this context, it was also argued that Halil Paşa was a co-religionist with the Kızılbaş due to his Albanian origin, by implying that he belonged to the Bektaşi order.[179] One of striking points in the document is that the accusations against Halil Paşa were predominantly expressed in anonymous letters, and the local officials tacitly approved and forwarded them to the central government. Lastly, another example of the use of the allegation of relation with the Kızılbaş in the rivalry between state officials is a report of Memduh Paşa against Osman Efendi, was a prosecutor in Van and originally from Sivas. To Memduh Paşa, Osman Efendi's marriage to a woman whose father was known as Kızılbaş Ali was an example of his "untrustworthiness."[180]

2.2.4 Evaluation

The allegation of unintentionally or intentionally turning a blind eye to the danger of the Kızılbaş and their possible alliance with Armenians was a prevalent accusation in the matters of rivalry and animosity between governors, local officials, and

[177] BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 30/54.
[178] BOA, DH. MKT. 251/15.
[179] BOA, DH. MKT. 251/15.
[180] BOA, Y.PRK.HR. 13/29.

provincial notables. It can be observed that the most exaggerated allegations in the documents regarding the Kızılbaş are those involving such rivalries and denunciations about the negligence of the danger of the Kızılbaş. In fact, it is quite understandable the prevalence of these arguments because of the fact that documents regarding some "sensitive" subjects had been investigated in-depth, such as the Armenian "plots," missionary activities, and rumors about conversion to Christianity, Alevism, or Shiism. For instance, in a document about the subject, even though the claims of conversion of the Kızılbaş into Protestantism have been found groundless, the inspector underscores the significance of continuing inquiries in this matter.[181]

On the other hand, by all means, the use of the Kızılbaş issue as a tool for internal rivalries among state officials does not mean that such a problem did not exist for the state. Leaving aside the exaggerated aspects of the documents, the common point in all of the documents on the Kızılbaş is the emphasis on the need to correct the beliefs of this community whose names are Muslim but who do not live as Muslims and include them in the circle of civilization. Apart from the fact that whether the Kızılbaş pose a critical threat to the state's security, according to Memduh Bey, or this argument may transform a religious problem into a political problem, according to Halil Bey, the common point of both is the necessity that the Kızılbaş population has to be educated and enlightened to assimilate into Sunni Islamic faith.

[181] BOA, Y.EE. 132/39.

2.3 The solution: "*tashih-i itikad*"

Almost every document or report regarding the Kızılbaş has also a part of the solution offers to the central government in order to take measures to prevent the danger of Kızılbaş and a more dangerous possibility, which is the alliance between the Kızılbaş and Armenians. As explained in the previous parts of the chapter, both central government and governors and officials in provinces had meticulously approached any allegation and denunciation, and some proposed solutions were asserted by local and central officials. Foremost among these solutions was the construction of mosques and schools in Kızılbaş villages and sending clerics to advise them in order to bring them into the "true" path of Islam. Nonetheless, most of these propositions were composed of only these expressions, and there was no more information or program regarding how to achieve the plan or the steps of this method.

This section of the chapter will investigate three cases which have detailed propositions at different levels about the policy of *tashih-i itikad*, the correction of the faith. The first document was written by a local official, Mehmed Eyyub Efendi, in 1893 about the possibilities of spreading education in the context of the *tashih-i itikad* of the Kızılbaş of Dersim. It is the least detailed document in this section. Mehmed Eyyub Efendi especially concentrated on the difficulties of the financial situation for establishing primary schools in the district.

The second document is the first central draft of a program regarding how the policy of the correction of the faith is executed towards the Kızılbaş. The explanatory document was authored by Şeyhülislam Mehmed Cemaleddin Efendi in 1894. After some preliminary information about the subject and its importance, Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi prepared a draft of instruction, which has eight articles. The

aforementioned document has also been sent to the governors of related provinces and several ministries.

Lastly, a set of documents, including a report of Grand Vizier Ferid Paşa and governors' responses to this, will be examined. Ferid Paşa sent the report and gave instructions to take necessary precautions to the governors of Ankara, Sivas, Mamuretülaziz and Erzurum at the end of 1893. The governor of Sivas, Reşid Akif Bey, and the governor of Mamuretülaziz, Abdurrahman Hasan Bey, sent their responses back to the Grand Viziership at the beginning of 1894. Even though both these three documents will be analyzed, the response of Abdurrahman Hasan Bey has more significance due to its exhaustive content, and critical approach to the common proposal, which was "the construction of school and mosques in Kızılbaş villages and sending clerics to preach there."

2.3.1 A local example of the potentials of the *tashih-i itikad*: Dersim

One of the first proposed solutions was sent to the Vilayet of Mamuretülaziz by a local official, Mehmed Eyyub Efendi, in 1893. In the report, it is stated that five of the seven districts of Dersim, which consisted of Kızılbaş population, should only be brought into the "circle of civilization" by increasing their level of education. On the other hand, due to financial constrictions, an exemplary school has to be constructed in a place that should be in the center of these Kızılbaş-populated districts of Dersim. Mehmed Eyyüb Efendi makes a calculation regarding the expenditures of the schools that were proposed to be built, including construction costs, boards of students, teachers' wages, and so on. As a result of this calculation, Mehmed Eyyüb Efendi indicates that the budget of the Vilayet is insufficient to afford the construction of primary schools in every district. He also emphasizes that the appropriation of the

budget of other vilayets for these schools would absolutely not be lawful. Because of these difficulties, he proposes that it should be constructed a secondary school, Rüşdî Mekteb, in the district of Mazgird.[182]

In the report, it is propounded that two primary schools in Ovacık and Kızılkilise should be improved, and a non-boarding school should be constructed in the districts of Hozat and Pah in Dersim. After emphasizing the great significance of the boarding schools, Mehmed Eyyub Efendi advises that the students who completed their education in the local schools should be sent to the schools in Diyarbekir and Sivas in order to get a higher education.[183] This document, though on a regional scale, offers a more concrete solution to the Kızılbaş "question" in comparison to the general policy suggestions such as building mosques and schools in Kızılbaş villages. In this context, it can be observed that the state's attempts for *tashih-i itikad* of the Kızılbaş people were more serious in the case of Dersim where its population were considered as more "dangerous" and had to be "tamed" by the government.

2.3.2 The instruction of Şeyhülislam Mehmed Cemaleddin Efendi

One of the most concrete reports regarding the *tashih-i itikad* of the Kızılbaş is the explanatory document of Şeyhülislam Mehmed Cemaleddin Efendi, which was written in 1894. The document begins by quoting the expressions of Mehmed Memduh Paşa in a report that "… this large population, known as Kızılbaş, which settle within the vilayet of Ankara, especially Yozgat and Kırşehir, and from Sivas to the Iranian border, has completely left Islam due to their superstitious beliefs. Although they claim that they are Muslims ostensibly, they accept all sorts of haram

[182] BOA, BEO. 136/10157.
[183] BOA, BEO. 136/10157.

as halal among themselves. It has to be taken precautions urgently in order to emancipate them [the Kızılbaş] from their detrimental faith."[184]

Mehmed Cemaleddin Efendi summarizes his proposal in four steps, and then he presents a draft that has eight articles. He begins the report by stating that "the heresy of this abovementioned group [the Kızılbaş] stems from their ignorance." Therefore, in order to extirpate their ignorance, the first step should be to construct sufficient mosques and schools where it is required. The second step is to send imams who have a peaceful nature in order to amend them to the right path of Islam through preaching and counsel. For the third step, Cemaleddin Efendi demands that these imams must prepare a monthly report that also contains how many Kızılbaş convert to Sunni Islam and sent this report to the office of Şeyhülislam. Lastly, he proposes that several officers should be assigned to evaluate these reports. Then, these officials should determine how many preachers should be sent and what more needs to be done according to the contents of these reports. After the summary of his plan, Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi conveys eight articles regarding the *tashih-i itikad* of the Kızılbaş:

> The Office of Şeyhülislam
>
> It is an instruction draft that shows the duties of the clerics who will be sent to the villagers called *Sürhser* [Kızılbaş] in various places in Ankara and Sivas provinces, in accordance with the edict of our most excellent caliph and sultan, with the duty of guiding and turning them from the deadlock of ignorance to the path of guidance by preaching and giving advice.
>
> Article 1: Clerics who will be chosen by the office of Şeyhülislam will deliver the correspondence they carry to the governor of the vilayet upon their arrival. The governor of the Vilayet, with the consensus and approval of the chief justice and the mufti, will send them to the villages where it is necessary, assigning police officers and gendarmes to escort them.

[184] BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 29/77.

Article 2: Clerics should settle in an available house to be indicated by the imam, headman or council of elders of the village upon their arrival to the villages where the aforementioned group [the Kızılbaş] inhabits. Having inquiries and necessary consultations, they [the clerics] will put their effort to perform their sermons and counsels in the praying places, masjids, or anywhere available in the village, to stay and reside in each village as much as required, to work tirelessly to revert the people of deviant faiths into the true path, and by doing so, to spin around the villages and to do perform their duty well.

Article 3: First and foremost, clerics should narrate about the essence of creed and Islam; the pillars of Islam, which are the confession of faith, prayer, fasting, zakat, and hajj; the earthly and divinely virtues and superiorities of worships, obeying the orders and avoiding the prohibitions, and having the true faith; the earthly and divinely punishment for those do not correct their wrong path and superstitious faith. They [clerics] will perform their sermons in simple expression and with complete gentleness, in a way that the people of the village can understand.

Article 4: After the duty mentioned in the Article 3, they [the clerics] will adequately explain and teach that it will bring happiness and peace in this life and in the afterlife to worship and obey to Allah, who is great and holy; to have respect and love to our prophet, the last of the prophets, the most excellent peace and prayers be upon him; to the four great caliphs, may Allah bless them all; to the other companions and family members of the prophet; to have obedience and loyalty for our sultan, who is the leader of all the believers and the shadow of Allah on the Earth.

Article 5: After the necessary counsel regarding faith and worship are conveyed well, they [clerics] will gradually perform their sermons which states what is halal and haram and teaches customs and morality in accordance with the verses of the Quran and the provisions of the hadith regarding customs and morality, haram and prohibitions, halal and permissible, and the subjects of decency and morality will be explained clearly.

Article 6: [Clerics] should put their effort and behave well religiously and humanely to make the villagers to avoid the stories that will confuse them and the discourses and narratives that do not comply with reason, accounts, customs, and morality; and to guide them to the true path and correct their creed by counseling them with helpful preaching in accordance with the *Ehl-i Sünnet* [Sunni] beliefs.

Article 7: Clerics should report and attach their opinions to the Office of Şeyhülislam about how many residents of the villages where they are performing sermons and counseling corrected their creed with the help of Allah and as a result of their work and efforts.

> Article 8: As providing a salary and subsistence to the clerics by the government is for sure, clerics will behave with moderation and fairness and will not rely on anybody for food and any other supplies.
>
> Annex: Because when a cleric's good services and good works come into reality in accordance with these instructions, he will receive rewards and promotion in his profession, and in the opposite case, he will be treated accordingly; he should always consider about this and work hard to serve his religion and state well, and show care and effort in the task assigned to him.[185]

Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi formulated a program that encompasses a more comprehensive and systematic approach compared to the suggested methods of "constructing mosques and schools and sending clerics to the Kızılbaş villages." The instruction outlined the qualifications of the clerics to be dispatched, albeit without providing an exhaustive account. It underscored the importance of their approachability towards the populace and their ability to communicate their teachings in a manner that resonated with their audience. Furthermore, it is stated that the aforementioned clerics are required to submit a monthly report to the office of Şeyhülislam regarding the number of individuals who have undergone conversion to Sunni Islam. Additionally, it is recommended that supplementary officials be designated to scrutinize these reports and implement any actions for augmentation in these policies as occasion requires. Nevertheless, despite the enhanced level of detail in Cemaleddin Efendi's report compared to prior documents, the crucial matter of financial resources required for the implementation of these programs remains unaddressed.

[185] BOA, Y.A.RES. 70/33.

2.3.3 The reports of Ferid Paşa, Reşid Akif Bey, and Abdurrahman Hasan Bey

In 1894, Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi presented an eight-article document that served as the initial comprehensive plan for the *tashih-i itikad* of the Kızılbaş. However, a decade later, more extensive correspondences were exchanged between the Grand Viziership, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Governorships of four Vilayets, namely Ankara, Sivas, Erzurum, and Mamuretülaziz. The initial record comprises telegrams dispatched by Grand Vizier Ferid Paşa to the provinces of Ankara, Sivas, Erzurum, and Mamuretülaziz on November 28, 1903.

Before the telegrams sent to the provinces, Ferid Pasha mentions that the sects of Bektashi, Kızılbaş and Shi'a were spreading in various provinces of Anatolia, Rumeli, and Iraq. He emphasizes the criticality of implementing precautionary steps to counteract this perceived threat. Grand Vizier Ferid Paşa begins the report by stating that schools and masjids should be built, and clerics should be sent to the provinces of Sivas, Mamuretülaziz and Erzurum. The purpose of these measures is to counteract the prevailing ignorance regarding the heretical beliefs propagated by Bektaşi Çelebi Cemaleddin Efendi, who led the inhabitants of Hacıbektaş district in Kırşehir astray. Additionally, attention is drawn to a group known as Kızılbaş, who espouse the same deviant faith as Cemaleddin Efendi. The clerics are additionally anticipated to provide sermons within these communities with the purpose of providing guidance to the inhabitants and redirecting them towards the orthodox tenets of the Islamic faith.[186]

According to Ferid Paşa's report, "the propagation of views that are in conflict with Islam by Bektaşi sheikhs in different regions of Rumeli and Anatolia, as well as by Shias in Iraq, has resulted in the proliferation and consolidation of these

[186] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.

sects. Addressing the issue of religion and implementing efforts to counteract this wrongdoing is both a religious and political necessity. This endeavor must be undertaken through educational initiatives and the dissemination of information."[187] Subsequently, Ferid Paşa presents a preliminary outline of a program that encompasses a series of measures aimed at rectifying the "heretical beliefs" held by these "ignorant" groups.

> Even though the spread of education in the time of our equitable Sultan was incomparable to previous periods and reached even the remotest places, more actions have to be taken to improve existing schools and to build new ones where these heretical faiths [the sects of Bektaşi, Kızılbaş, and Shi'a] have taken root. In addition, because of the fact that the language of some of the existing Turkish books and pamphlets, which include the Islamic creed, is not comprehensible to the general public, a concise and comprehensible catechism, *ilmihal*, should be written by recollecting and reorganizing the principles of the religion that every believer must know in a way that everyone can understand. A specific scholarly committee should be constituted in the office of Şeyhülislam in order to reform and reorganize the methodology in education, and a curriculum should be prepared. A pamphlet in Turkish and Arabic, which includes a catechetical theme, should be written and delivered to the aforementioned provinces and to the primary schools in those provinces. In order to tackle the Shiite sect, schools and madrasas specific to Baghdad and Basra should be established, and education in the Arabic language should be provided in these schools.[188]

The remaining part of the document consists of two telegrams. One of them was sent to the governance of Ankara, and the other one was sent to the governances of Sivas, Mamuretülaziz, and Erzurum.

> A copy of the encrypted telegram written to the Province of Ankara
>
> In Kırşehir, it has been unfortunately reported that the situation of education is in a very backward state and that the Bektaşi Çelebis and their followers are publicly corrupting and misguiding the ignorant people there. Because the fact that the interdicting of every kind of prohibition and illicit things according to Islam is an absolute duty for government officials, and it is obvious that the source of this deviance stems from ignorance, it is a necessity to investigate this matter secretly. As a result of this investigation, if such a situation is true, it is

[187] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.
[188] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.

> recommended to increase public schools and to spread the production of knowledge and information in order to eradicate the ignorance of the people and to report the situation [to the Grand Vizier].
>
> A copy of the encrypted telegrams written to the Provinces of Erzurum, Sivas, and Mamuretülaziz
>
> It has been, unfortunately, reported that a number of Kızılbaş have emerged in the province and have been violating and corrupting the true religious faith of the gullible people. Due to the fact that the occurrence and continuation of this situation, which contradicts the holy Sharia, is by no means inexcusable, it is recommended to take urgently necessary precautions to eradicate the effects of the situation and to send clerics to these villages to perform sermons on the purpose of indoctrination of true religious beliefs, and to increase public schools and to spread knowledge and information in order to eradicate the ignorance of the people, and to report the situation [to the Grand Vizier].[189]

In the subsequent months following the aforementioned telegram, the governors of Sivas and Mamuretülaziz conveyed their reply to Grand Vizier Ferid Paşa. The report submitted by Abdurrahman Hasan Bey, the Governor of Mamuretülaziz, exhibits a higher level of depth and offers a more significant number of recommendations when compared to the response provided by Reşid Akif Bey, the Governor of Sivas.

Reşid Akif Bey begins his response by emphasizing that the Kızılbaş has not newly emerged within the vilayet. Therefore, he says that "whoever has reported in this way is due to dearth of accurate information or personal animosity [against me]."[190] In light of the frequent accusations against his predecessor, Halil Bey, for allegedly promoting the Kızılbaş in Sivas either willingly or unknowingly, Reşid Akif Bey's defensive response may also reflect the influence of competition among local officials, including governors, who sought to exploit the issue surrounding the Kızılbaş community. Reşid Akif Bey continues his response by stating that the

[189] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.
[190] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.

Kızılbaş community in Sivas and other vilayets of the Empire have been handed down and inherited for hundreds of years until the contemporary time as a counterargument against the claim that the Kızılbaş faith is spreading in Sivas. Then, he emphasizes that "it is very obvious that the government has to think about this chronic trouble [Kızılbaş question] which encompasses not only here [Sivas] but rather the Ankara and Erzurum provinces, many parts of Kurdistan and especially the whole of Dersim, without leaving its solution to the governances of these provinces alone." [191] Subsequently, Reşid Akif Bey asserts in his response that he has been cognizant of this predicament ever since assuming the position of Governorship in Sivas, and he pledges to intensify his endeavors in accordance with the findings presented by Grand Vizier Ferid Paşa.

Abdurrahman Hasan Bey, governor of Mamuretülaziz, also starts to refute the allegation that the Kızılbaş were spreading in the region by emphasizing that "the adherents to various sects that are called Kızılbaş are those who have preserved their sects from of old." He continues to state that "the Kızılbaş who live in the Sancak of Dersim, several districts of the province and even fifteen or twenty village of Harput are incomparable with the Iranian Shiites whose clerics grasp of the complexity of Arabic language and Islamic sciences, and even they do not have any knowledge to deserve to be called as humans." Therefore, he indicates that "in order for them [the Kızılbaş] to have the ability to comprehend a single word, education and training are first and foremost necessary; and it exhaustively requires to investigate in-depth what kind of educational method would be easier to utilize in order to awaken their desire for education and training and not to frighten them due to their ignorance and their

[191] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.

hatred towards Ehl-i Sünnet, which has been passed from generation to generation and they have taken it as faith of basis without thinking about it."[192]

Abdurrahman Hasan Bey states that "the first measure that comes to mind is establishing schools for the children of the Kızılbaş to teach them the correct theology of Islam in these schools and to send clerics to their elders in order to preach and advise them." As it has been frequently and mostly superficially indicated in many documents regarding the theme of "correctional" policies of the Kızılbaş, Abdurrahman Hasan Bey mentions the measure of the "establishing primary schools and sending clerics" for the correction of faith, *tashih-i itikad*. On the other hand, he indicates that "even the theory of this kind of correction can be seen simple and appropriate, it is obvious that the Kızılbaş do not voluntarily send their children to these schools. And it is proven by experience that the application of this measure is an incomplete action because in the case of the need to use force and violence [for enrolling the Kızılbaş children on these schools], they [the Kızılbaş] will not refrain from inculcating hatred and enmity in their children, and it would not be appropriate to separate children from their parents and relatives."[193]

Abdurrahman Hasan Bey also criticizes the second most common suggestion for the "correcting of the belief," which was the advice to send clerics to the Kızılbaş villages in order to perform sermons and preaches. He states that "especially with regard to sending clerics among the Kızılbaş, because of the fact that the Kızılbaş are enemies of the ulama of Ehl-i Sünnet due to their faith, it is certain that the clerics will not be able to reside among them. Consequently, a correction plan in this way is a burden to be chosen in vain."[194]

[192] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.
[193] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.
[194] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.

After criticizing the common and cursory suggestions for the policies of the "correction of faith," Abdurrahman Hasan Bey asserts his proposition by starting as "in my humble opinion." His first proposition is that "in the matter of primary schools, only the amelioration of the method of education would be sufficient for now. In addition to this, it should be established the competent madrasas where it is necessary, which combine the education of Islamic sciences and "new sciences" (*fünûn-ı cedîde*) by being subjected to an exceptional curriculum. In these abovementioned madrasas, if this new education and training program is applied by assigning the competent clerics and even European science teachers, those who have the belief that our Imam Ali has resided on the moon and the belief of "metamorphosis[195]," which is derived from the sect of Hulûliye, will be annihilated. This plan of correction will succeed in causing an alteration in fifteen or twenty years."[196]

After proposing his measure actions for the "correction of faith" of the Kızılbaş, Abdurrahman Hasan Bey tries to corroborate his suggestions by emphasizing the socio-economic "inferiority" of the Kızılbaş due to their "ignorance." He states that "these people called Kızılbaş have been living in poverty and disgrace as a result of their ignorance, and in consequence of the improvement in their living conditions because of the sciences that they will gain, they will attract to those who are striving for their own good. And because of the fact that it is the necessity of humanity that one should not harbor hatred and enmity toward the faith and the leader of a person with whom he loves. In addition to this reason, on account

[195] In this context, Abdurrahman Hasan Bey possibly confuses the terms of metamorphosis ("*don değiştirme*") and incarnation ("*hulûl*"). According to Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, the term "*don değiştirme*" is shapeshifting between different species, especially from human to animal shapes, while the term *hulûl* means that Allah can be embodied in a human, especially Ali ibn Abu Talib in this context. For a detailed information, see; Ocak, *Alevî ve Bektaşî İnançlarının İslam Öncesi Temelleri,* 197-226.
[196] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.

of the fact that a mind that is accustomed to training and education would be naturally eager to learn everything, they [the Kızılbaş] will have a desire to learn Islamic sciences by themselves. In this way, only then will the minds be capable of distinguishing the good and the evil, and reasoning start to grasp the virtues of Islamic truths."[197]

Within the framework of this particular "mission civilisatrice" through educational endeavors, Abdurrahman Hasan Bey exemplifies the missionary schools. According to his statement, the establishment of foreign ("*Ecnebi*") education institutes, has followed this particular arrangement. "Even though the American schools in Harput whose aim is to spread Protestantism, and it is a well-known fact that Protestantism appears in the region by their means, Armenians and even the Patriarch are grateful to them because these schools serve for the education." [198]

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the approach of the Ottoman Empire and its officials towards the Kızılbaş community during the last decade of the nineteenth century under three titles: the description, the threat perception, and the solution propositions. Even though the three titles were examined inside distinct sections, it is noteworthy that nearly all documents pertaining to the subject encompass multiple facets. Nonetheless, taking into account the contents of the documents, this categorization is effective in analyzing the Kızılbaş policy of the state in order to conceptualize in the context of the relationship between the *tashih-i itikad* policy and the "modernization" process. In this context, all three of these titles of the chapter collectively constitute the important components of this analysis.

[197] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.
[198] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.

The official stance during the late Ottoman period underwent a transition from disregard to assimilation in relation to the Kızılbaş "question" that emerged in the sixteenth century. One notable disparity in the language and discourse used in archival documents pertaining to the Kızılbaş between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries is the shift towards a more investigative, detailed, and assimilation-based approach. This shift primarily focuses on elucidating various aspects of the Kızılbaş, such as their faith, traditions, rituals and way of life, among other related subjects. These documents were mostly produced by the local officials including governors. However, the high-ranking central government officials also evaluated these reports, and focused on the "problem." Some local Sunni notables in the provinces where the Kızılbaş population was intense also participated to produce report regarding the Kızılbaş's "danger." Even though all of these actors shared a common point of view in the sense that the Kızılbaş's "perversion and ignorance" was a vital threat to the state's security, their descriptions and solution offers may differentiate. For example, a local notable in Yozgat was mostly focused on that "how much the Kızılbaş are deviant," but governmental officials constructed their discourses on the basis of the way that the Kızılbaş's perversion solved.

Following an endeavor to delineate the features associated with the Kızılbaş, including their faith, rituals, traditions, and their subgroups, the documents proceed to address the potential perils that may arise from this "religious problem." These potential threats are mostly about the Kızılbaş's relation with other groups, especially Armenians and Protestant missionaries. In the documents, it is determined that the religious "perversion" of the Kızılbaş from the Islamic orthodoxy might probably lead them to an alliance with these groups to participate in intrigues and possible revolts against the Ottoman Empire. It is also frequently emphasized that the Kızılbaş

did not hesitate to betray (Sunni) Muslims from of old. Another potential threat is a conversion to Protestantism due to the missionary activities among them and their "absolute ignorance." This argument of ignorance is also used in the subject of the relations with Armenians. On the other hand, the reports primarily scrutinize the aspect of daily interactions between the Kızılbaş and Armenians in order to prove that there is an enormous threat for strengthening the Armenian plot by participating in the Kızılbaş because of their affinity towards Armenians, ignorance, hatred against Muslims, and "destructive" activities of Armenians and missionaries among the Kızılbaş. Even though there was a consensus about a concern for the existence of the Kızılbaş in the entire documents, officials had different approaches towards the extent of the problem. For example, Mehmed Memduh Bey, who became the Minister of Internal Affairs after serving as the governor of Sivas and Ankara, accused Halil Bey, who succeeded him as the governor of Sivas, of stirring up the Kızılbaş through his own reports as well as letters from officials and notables in his entourage. On the other hand, Halil Bey asserts that these allegations originated from animosity and hostility directed towards him. In addition, he states that these exaggerated report about the Kızılbaş community will merely serve to transform a situation that does not yet constitute a political problem into a political predicament. This will consequently intertwine the issue of the Kızılbaş with the already existing Armenian question. Nonetheless, what is common between Memduh Bey and Halil Bey was the necessity to enforce the policy of *tashih-i itikad* onto the Kızılbaş community, which means the correction of the faith.

As it is indicated, the most distinctive feature of this period's policy towards the Kızılbaş was an aim to assimilate them to Sunni Islam as a response to the "detrimental" activities of Armenians and missionaries, as well as to eliminate a

population that was deemed untrustworthy due to their sect being considered "deviant." Because of the fact that the root of these abovementioned problems was perceived to stem from the absolute "ignorance" of the Kızılbaş, the most recommended solution was to construct schools and mosques in Kızılbaş villages. However, many documents that were written about this subject does not include a systematic program how this policy is implemented. Rather, it was mostly only composed of the expression that "it is necessary to build schools and mosques in Kızılbaş villages."

Another significant point is that most of the documents about the "*tashih-i itikat*" of the Kızılbaş was on a regional scale. The documents that were produced by local officials were primarily about the region where the official was on duty. For example, in 1893, Mehmed Eyyub Efendi wrote a report on what could be carried out for the correction of the faith of the Kızılbaş in Dersim province and sent it to the governorship of Mamuretülaziz. Even though the report focused on one province, Mehmed Eyyub Efendi was the first official to discuss the financial constraints of spreading education in the context of correcting the faith of the Kızılbaş. He suggested constructing primary schools in specific villages that are centrally located. Then, he stated that the children who have completed their primary and secondary education in Dersim should be sent to Sivas or Diyarbekir for higher education. In this context, Mehmed Eyyub Efendi's report offers more concrete recommendations regarding the establishment of schools, having mentioned the financial matters of his recommendations as well as logistic aspects such as suitable places to build. Therefore, it can be observed that the reports for the *tashih-i itikad* of Kızılbaş had been taken more seriously in Dersim in comparison to the Kızılbaş of Central Anatolia.

Another significant document was authored in 1894 by Şeyhülislam Mehmed Cemaleddin Efendi, who was the second longest-serving person in the office of şeyhülislam in Ottoman history.[199] In the document, Cemaleddin Efendi after emphasizing the importance of resolving the Kızılbaş issue, wrote an eight-article draft of instruction regarding the way of correcting the faith and sent it to the governorships of Ankara, Sivas, Mamuretülaziz, and Erzurum.

One of the most significant aspects of Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi's document is that it was the first step to propose a detailed program for the correction of the faith of the Kızılbaş. His instruction draft aimed to construct a standard program for the *tashih-i itikad*, not only focused on a single vilayet. The central theme of the instruction is concentrated on the method of "delivering sermons" by the clerics rather than spreading education. He also states that these clerics should send monthly reports that include how many people converted to Sunni Islam due to their sermons. Furthermore, he states that the appointment of designated officials is necessary to assess these reports and ascertain further actions to be taken for the *tashih-i itikad*. However, what is lacking in the document is the subject of financial resources and difficulties for these policies.

After a couple of months of Şeyhülislam's document, the governors of Sivas and Mamuretülaziz submitted their respective responses pertaining to the subject. The governor of Sivas, Reşid Akif Bey, emphasizes that there are not newly emerged Kızılbaş in the vilayet, and those who assert such a claim either have an enmity against him or lack of information. After this emphasis, Reşid Akif Bey asserts that all measures will continue to be taken for the *tashih-i itikad* of the Kızılbaş.

[199] Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi, *Siyasi Hatıralarım*, 11.

Abdurrahman Hasan Bey, the governor of Mamuretülaziz, presents a more detailed and comprehensive report, even though he also emphasizes that the Kızılbaş faith is not spreading and that the existing Kızılbaş are a community that has maintained their faith for centuries. This report has the most critical approach towards the proposed solution for the *tashih-i itikad* of the Kızılbaş in the sense of their practicability. He asserts that due to the fact that the Kızılbaş have a hatred against the Islamic ulema, it would be an unavailing effort to send clerics to them in order to preach. In the same way, they will not be eager to send their children to the schools due to their hatred. In the case that their children are forcibly enrolled on the schools, they will not hesitate to inculcate more enmity in their children.

For all of these abovementioned reasons, Abdurrahman Hasan Bey advocates an alternative method that proposes to focus on the Kızılbaş should be incorporated into the "circle of civilization" as the first step instead of the aim of spreading Sunnism among this community directly. He proposes a more long-range program for the *tashih-i itikad* of the Kızılbaş by way of disseminating the fundamental education and the removal of their "miserable and contemptible life" before the propagation of the Islamic truths among them. Although similar expressions were occasionally used about the Central Anatolian Kızılbaş, Abdurrahman Hasan Bey's emphasis on "civilization" is more dominant. Here, the tribal structure of the Kızılbaş of Dersim and the presence of nomadism in the region led to the prominence of the discourse of "civilization" in the *tashih-i itikad* of Kızılbaş.

Tashih-i itikad is a project having different reasons and different outcomes when implemented on different non-Sunni populations. The aim of this thesis is to explore the *tashih-i itikad* policies and its varying nature on different populations by focusing on two main groups, Kızılbaş and Shiites of the Ottoman Empire, while also

mentioning other groups briefly, especially Zaydis and Nusayris. The next chapter, therefore, will examine the deliberations and execution of this policy on the Shiite population in Iraq by both central government and local officials during the same period.

CHAPTER 3

"TASHİH-İ İTİKAD" ON THE SHIITES OF IRAQ

As previously stated, one of the communities targeted by the *tashih-i itikad* policy was the Shiites, who had a significant population within the Empire and were predominantly concentrated in regions such as the Baghdad and Basra provinces, as well as in Lebanon's Jebel Amil. This chapter will examine the *tashih-i itikad* policy directed towards the Shiites in Ottoman Iraq, focusing on the Shiite populations in the Baghdad and Basra provinces. The *tashih-i itikad* project was part of Abdulhamid II's aims towards centralization, "civilizing mission," and the reinforcement of ideological legitimacy. In this context, it encompasses far more than mere Sunnitization policies. Analyzing the policies directed towards the Shiites in Iraq is essential for understanding this thesis' argument that the planning and execution of the *tashih-i itikad* policies varied according to the community, geography, and perceived threat level. Even though the Shiites were among the communities targeted by the *tashih-i itikad* policy, the state's approach towards the Shiites had notable distinctions compared to other non-Sunni communities.

As mentioned in the introduction, a comparative analysis is beneficial for examining the diverse aspects of the *tashih-i itikad* policy. Alongside this policy, there exists an extensive body of literature produced by Ottoman bureaucrats concerning these groups. This literature includes information production, definitions, situations in which these groups were deemed to pose a "threat," and proposed solutions to this "problem." In simplest terms, the sum of the policies proposed for these groups, whose sectarian identities were considered a "threat" to the state, can be categorized under the title of *tashih-i itikad*. In almost every example, the root of

the problem was perceived as the “ignorance of the pure people.” Therefore, it was deemed possible to extricate these “ignorant” people from their “superstitious beliefs” and “ignorance” by providing them with “correct information.” The most common proposed solutions were building mosques and schools, and sending teachers and preachers. While the proposals on paper appear similar, even the meticulousness in planning, let alone their execution, points to significant differences. Analyzing the state's relatively more inclusive approach towards the Shiites of Iraq compared to the Kızılbaş reveals a strategic and pragmatic policy that extends beyond sectarian considerations.

This chapter seeks to analyze the policies implemented through the *tashih-i itikad* policies against the Shiite community in Iraq during the late nineteenth century, primarily in the 1890s. Prior to delving into the subject matter and objective of this chapter, it is beneficial to briefly address the historical context of the Ottoman Empire’s relation with the region of Iraq and the Shiite community.

3.1 Historical background

In the Ottoman Empire, the vilayets of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul corresponded to the present-day borders of Iraq. In the documents, reform plans concerning Iraq are referred to as *hıtta-i Irakiyye*, “the country of Iraq,” encompassing these three provinces. An important aspect in shaping policies for Iraq was the centralization strategy and the effort to implement reforms across all provinces. In Iraq, particularly in the eighteenth century, central administration had weakened; while Mosul was governed by a local family, the vilayets of Baghdad and Basra were under the control of the Mamluk pashas from 1747 to 1831.[200] With the Tanzimat period, the goal of

[200] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 31.

establishing central authority in all provinces was also pursued in the provinces of Iraq. Initially, to break local power centers, the objective was to appoint governors from Istanbul and to assign officials who would be directly accountable to the central authority.[201] From 1844 onwards, administrative, financial, and military efforts were undertaken to implement Tanzimat reforms, including the initiation of population registration, which was essential for regular conscription.[202] By the time of Abdulhamid II, the determination in centralization policies had increased. Abdulhamid II aimed to prevent all tendencies towards administrative autonomy by bypassing the bureaucratic hierarchy and was a strong advocate of centralization.[203]

Before delving into the reform efforts in Iraq and the policies toward the Iraqi Shiites, it is useful to briefly address the presence of the Shiite population in the Ottoman Empire. Significant Shiite populations were found in the Baghdad and Basra provinces of Iraq, in the Jabal Amil region of the Levant, and in Eastern Arabia. Juan Cole categorizes the historical situation of the Shiites in the Ottoman Empire into three periods: first, from 1516 to 1750, marked by "harsh Sunni Ottoman rule" in connection with the rise of the Safavids; second, from 1750 to the mid-nineteenth century, when local Shiite elites were influential due to the weakening of central control in the empire; and finally, during the remaining part of the nineteenth century, when this semi-autonomous status was largely lost as central control was reasserted.[204]

As previously mentioned, by the nineteenth century, the state's policy towards non-Sunni communities had evolved into an assimilationist approach. Previously, as long as taxes could be collected and they did not pose a "security threat," these

[201] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 33.
[202] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 34.
[203] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 44.
[204] Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War*, 17-25.

communities, although not officially recognized, were generally ignored. However, with the policies aimed at assimilation, these communities were approached with a new perspective by Ottoman bureaucrats. In the contexts of modernization and centralization, their identities, beliefs, and traditions began to be studied, considering the "threats" they posed. The Shiites, who were densely populated and formed the majority in some regions of Iraq, were at the forefront of these groups.

Apart from the general reform process and centralization policy, Iraq held critical importance for the state in the nineteenth century due to its various dynamics. The historical Shiite presence in Iraq and the region's extensive border with Iran were among the primary factors forming the threat perception. Since the sixteenth century, there had been competition between the Ottoman Empire and Iran to dominate the Iraq region, especially Baghdad.[205] The Iraq region was described as "remote from the center, susceptible to invasion as a border area, with a large Shiite population and economically impoverished tribal regions."[206] Furthermore, one of the most significant issues drawing the state's attention to Iraq in the nineteenth century was the spread of Shiism among nomadic tribes.

3.2 The spread of Shiism among the nomadic tribes

Since the late eighteenth century, Shiism began to spread among the nominally Sunni nomadic Arab tribes.[207] Although the Shiite population historically existed in Iraq, there was a significant increase in the Shiite population at the expense of the Sunni population, especially from the nineteenth century onwards. In his article "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," Yitzhak Nakash examines the background,

[205] Hakyemez, *Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri ve Sünni-Şii İttifakı*, 127-128.
[206] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 29.
[207] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 443.

nature, and reasons for this conversion process. According to Nakash, one of the primary reasons for the conversion process of these tribes beginning in the eighteenth century was the shift of the Shiite ulama and religious education center from Isfahan to the cities of Karbala and Najaf.[208] The occupation of Isfahan by the Afghans led Shiite mujtahids to move from Iran to these cities, which also housed the sacred shrines, the Atabat. Another significant factor in the revitalization of these cities was the increase in settlements around these cities through the construction of water channels and dams, which enhanced the interaction between the tribes, mujtahids, and Shiite ulama.[209] The economic interactions of the tribes with the cities of Najaf and Karbala, particularly in the nineteenth century, led to the much more effective spread of Shiism.[210]

Another crucial point in the conversion process of the nomadic Arab tribes was the effort of the Shiite ulama to convert these tribes. One of the main reasons for this motivation was the rise of the Wahhabis. The attacks of the Wahhabis on Karbala and Najaf motivated the Shiite ulama for conversion due to the need for "a tribal army" to protect the holy places.[211] Another reason for the efforts of the Shiite mujtahids to spread Shiism among the nomadic Arab tribes was based on increasing economic resources. Visits to the cities housing the Imams' shrines, donations, and the *khums*, one-fifth of the earnings given to the mujtahids in Shia belief, were significant parts of the income of the Shiite ulama and these cities. The surrounding Arab tribes had no interest in these cities, and it was thought that the spread of Shiism among them would also increase economic revenues.[212]

[208] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 444.
[209] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 447-448.
[210] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 447.
[211] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 445-446.
[212] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 447.

On the other hand, as Nakash also expressed, the efforts and activities of the Shiite ulama are insufficient to explain this extensive conversion.[213] According to Nakash, "the magnitude of the conversion in the 19th century can be fully understood as an unintended consequence of the new Ottoman policy of tribal settlement."[214] Since the Ottoman administration took control of Iraq from the Mamluk pashas, they endeavored to implement centralization reforms in the province. The Ottomans aimed to address the empire's participation in the global capitalist economy by increasing agricultural production and tax revenues through the policy of settling the nomadic tribes.[215] Additionally, the settlement policy was seen as a way to "civilize" the nomads by establishing Sharia among them and encouraging them to prefer religious courts over tribal customs for resolving disputes.[216] Moreover, the socioeconomic transformations resulting from the transition from nomadism to agricultural production accelerated the spread of Shiism among these tribes. Ironically, the policies pursued by the Ottoman administration with the goals of centralization and "civilization" are among the factors that increased the spread of Shiism.

On the other hand, the spread of Shiism among the nomadic Arab tribes is not solely attributable to the state's policies. Income inequalities and the growth of these inequalities among the branches of tribes or tribal confederations also caused some tribal branches to reactively convert to Shiism.[217] Furthermore, the "antigovernment" aspect of Shiism, with its narrative of struggle against oppression and tyranny, aligning with the traditional Arab heroism narrative, was a factor that facilitated the

[213] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 448.
[214] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 449.
[215] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 449.
[216] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 449.
[217] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 456.

adoption of Shiism by tribal leaders.[218] Finally, as Nakash also noted, the nature of conversion varied. Sometimes a few individuals would convert, while other times an entire tribe would follow their leader's acceptance of Shiism.[219] By the twentieth century, there were many tribes that were sectarianly divided, with some parts being Sunni and others Shiite.[220]

The reasons for the spread of Shiism among the nomadic tribes and the measures that could be taken to prevent it were discussed by Ottoman bureaucrats. They identified factors such as the abundance of financial resources of the Shiite mujtahids, the weakness of Sunni madrasas and ulama, and the ignorance of the populace. This aspect of the issue will be examined in the later parts of the chapter.

Since the "problem" of the spread of Shiism began in the eighteenth century, discussions on this matter date back to before the era of Abdulhamid II. Before addressing the *tashih-i itikad* discussions against the Iraqi Shiites during the period of Abdulhamid II, it will be useful to touch upon the policies towards the Shiites before the Hamidian regime.

3.3 Policies towards the Shiites of Iraq during the pre-Hamidian era

Since the sixteenth century, Iraq had been a battleground for dominance between the Sunni Ottoman and Shiite Iranian states, and the strong Shiite population in Iraq, along with the concentration of holy sites, was a source of concern for the Ottoman administration. In 1831, Iraq came back under Ottoman control.[221] When Mahmud II ascended to the throne, the control of Karbala and Najaf was entirely in the hands of

[218] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 457-458.
[219] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 456.
[220] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 455-456.
[221] Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War*, 26.

the Shiite ulama.[222] The Ottoman Empire's policy aimed to establish central authority in the region by eliminating the relative autonomy of the Shiite ulama and tribal sheikhs. These efforts were met with resistance, leading to numerous rebellions and conflicts.[223] During this period, the centralization policies targeted not only the Shiite ulama and tribal sheikhs but also aimed to break the autonomy of the governors to achieve complete control from Istanbul.[224]

The efforts to implement the Tanzimat reforms, which aimed at centralization, were closely related to this issue. Establishing central administration in Iraq was seen as a means to achieve various goals, such as conscription, tax collection, and increasing production. According to Vecihi Pasha, the solution to the region's administrative and financial problems lay in establishing control over the tribes through ensuring security and collecting taxes.[225] Vecihi Pasha also suggested that the reforms directed at Iraq could be implemented by unifying Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul under a single administration.[226]

Although the spread of Shiism among the tribes began to be addressed as a serious issue primarily during the reign of Abdulhamid II, it had already caught the attention of Ottoman officials.[227] During this period, the approaches of the governors towards the Shiites varied. Restrictions were sometimes placed on Shiite public rituals, which had political aspects beyond their religious dimension. However, in 1845, the governor of Karbala attended the Muharram ceremony as a gesture of goodwill.[228] The legal existence of the Shiite ulama was never officially recognized.

---

[222] Kern, *Imperial Citizen*, 63.
[223] Cole & Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism: The Rebellion of Ottoman Karbala 1824-1843."
[224] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 33.
[225] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 35.
[226] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 35.
[227] Çetinsaya, "The Caliphs and Mujtahids," 562.
[228] Litvak, *Shi`i Scholars of Nineteenth Century Iraq*, 151.

Nonetheless, the governor of Baghdad, Namık Pasha, went further by declaring that the marriage and divorce proceedings conducted by the Shiite ulama would be invalid.[229] Another measure taken against the spread of Shiism was the prohibition of marriages between Ottoman citizens and Iranians. This ban was imposed in 1822, right after the Ottoman-Iranian war.[230] This ban did not resurface until 1874, when new discussions began about its strict enforcement.[231] In sum, in the pre-Abdulhamid II period, there were no systematic efforts attempted to assimilate or integrate Shiites into the Empire using strategies that sought "unity." Prior to the Hamidian era, governors generally implemented policies that were oppressive and forceful against Shiites, marked by restrictions and coercion.

3.4 *Tashih-i itikad* and policies towards Shiites of Iraq during the Hamidian regime

The Ottoman Empire became interested in the region primarily due to the swift dissemination of Shiism among the tribes in the nineteenth century rather than simply the presence of Shiites in the region from of old. The primary objective of the *tashih-i itikad* policy was to prevent the adoption of Shiism by these "ignorant" and nomadic tribes. In this context, the Iranian mujtahids were considered as the main threat in terms of "perversion" of these tribes. In the documents, it was also frequently emphasized the potential danger of Iran and Britain's influence on the region due to the spread of Shiism. In this context, the case of the *tashih-i itikad* policies for Iraq also had an aspect related to the "foreign threat;" but here, the danger did not originate from Christian missionaries like in other cases. This

[229] Litvak, *Shi`i Scholars of Nineteenth Century Iraq*, 152.
[230] Kern, "Rethinking Ottoman Frontier Policies," 11.
[231] Kern, "Rethinking Ottoman Frontier Policies," 12.

situation is also related to Shiism's institutionalized structure, which is based on "orthodox" Sharia as well as regional factors.

Although the spread of Shiism in Iraq had caught the attention of state officials before the reign of Abdulhamid II, it was primarily after 1885 that the existence of the Shiite "problem" was addressed with serious measures being sought.[232] As mentioned in earlier sections of this chapter, the spread of Shiism among the nomadic tribes, on top of an already existing Shiite population in Iraq, was perceived as a significant threat by the Ottoman administration. The reasons for this perception of threat included the increased difficulty in establishing central authority, the growth of a community viewed as "disloyal" at the border of the Shiite Iranian state, the spread of Shiism even among the soldiers of the Sixth Army stationed in Iraq, the strengthening of Shiite mujtahids who possessed independent power and institutional structure, and the rising influence of foreign powers such as Iran and England in the region.

Alongside the perceived "threat" of the spread of Shiism, many current and former bureaucrats penned reports on the origins, causes, and solutions to the problem. Two of these reports, the report of the Military Inspection Committee and the response to it by the Governor of Baghdad, Sırrı Pasha, as well as the report by Major Ali Rıza Efendi, are examined in detail in this chapter. However, a general evaluation of the content of these reports will be beneficial for analyzing the aspects under which the *tashih-i itikad* policy was addressed in the context of Iraqi Shiites.

The first issue that alarmed Ottoman officials against the "threat" of the spread of Shiism was the *Hüseyniyye Risalesi*, which contained Shiite propaganda and entered circulation in Istanbul in 1885.[233] A Nakşibendi sheikh, Gümüşhanevî

[232] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 219-220.
[233] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 220.

Ahmed Ziyaüddin Efendi, brought the treatise to attention by sending a copy to the palace, prompting Abdulhamid II to request a report on the matter from Hoca İshak Efendi.[234] In his report, Hoca İshak Efendi stated that the spread of Shiism was not a new phenomenon and that similar treatises had been published for twelve years. He suggested establishing a special committee to deal with such publications.[235] Hoca İshak Efendi also highlighted the gravity of the threat by noting that twenty years ago, most of the Iraqi population was Sunni, but with the gradual spread of Shiism, the local population would become "Iran's natural soldiers."[236] Following this report, Abdulhamid II instructed the grand vizier to collect all copies of the pamphlet and to have Ahmed Ziyaüddin Efendi write a counter-pamphlet.[237]

From this point onwards, numerous bureaucrats, both from the center and those who served or had served in Iraq, penned reports on the matter. First, these reports will address the evaluations regarding the sources of the problem. One of the most fundamental reasons for the spread of Shiism, as frequently mentioned in other cases, was the issue of "ignorance." According to former Basra governor Mehmed Ali, "the people of Iraq could not distinguish between the two sects (Sunni and Shiite) because they only saw the Shiite akhunds and were generally very "ignorant"; hence, it was natural for them to mistake Shiism for Islam."[238] Similarly, some Sunni ulama claimed that these tribal members were "barely Muslim" even before becoming Shiite.[239] However, the only factor was not the "ignorance" of the populace. The Sunni ulama of the region, who were expected to counteract Shiite

[234] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 220-221.
[235] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 221.
[236] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 221.
[237] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 222.
[238] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 228.
[239] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 456.

propaganda, were also considered to have "ignorance" in effectively refuting Shiism.[240]

One of the reasons for the spread of Shiism in Iraq was seen as the influential power held by Shia mujtahids, especially Iranian mujtahids. As previously mentioned, the presence of shrines in cities such as Karbala, Najaf, Kadhimiya, and Samarra, collectively known as the Atabat, along with the shift of the Shia religious education center from Iran to these cities, were among the factors contributing to the spread of Shiism. In addition to the substantial Shia population in Iraq, the frequent visits by Iranians to these shrines, their burial of the deceased in these locations, and the significant presence of Iranian ulema and students in the madrasas were also considered influential factors in the proliferation of Shiism in the region. The potential threat posed by the increasing Iranian population in Iraq was emphasized.[241] Documents suggest that Iranian akhunds and madrasa students were propagating Shiism among nomadic tribes. According to the report of Hoca İshak Efendi, 5,000-6,000 Iranian religious students were traveling among villages and tribes, spreading their "harmful" ideas.[242]

One of the most frequently noted claims regarding the influence of Shia ulema is the emphasis on the financial power held by the mujtahids. Donations made to the Atabat, aid from Iran, and the Oudh bequest sent by Indian Shias through the British were cited as significant financial sources enabling the mujtahids to propagate Shiism.[243] Conversely, the inadequacy of the Sunni ulema in responding to this propaganda was seen as another factor contributing to the spread of Shiism. The neglect of Sunni madrasas and the economic difficulties faced by the Sunni ulema

[240] Yaslıçimen, "Sunnism versus Shi'ism?," 120.
[241] Hakyemez, *Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri ve Sünni-Şii İttifakı*,128-129.
[242] Çetinsaya, "Ottoman View of the Shiite Community of Iraq in the Late Nineteenth Century," 23.
[243] Çetinsaya, "Ottoman View of the Shiite Community of Iraq in the Late Nineteenth Century," 21.

were frequently highlighted issues. Another problem identified in this context was the incompetence of the authorities. The lack of support for the Sunni ulema in the region and the failure to effectively counter Shia propaganda was attributed, in part, to the shortcomings of local administrators.

In the reports, after identifying and analyzing the causes of the spread of Shiism, opinions are expressed regarding the dangers the issue might pose and the seriousness of the threat. Chief among these threats was the increasing influence of Shia Iran, the Empire's long-time rival and neighboring country, in the region. The spread of Shiism in the region was not only seen as a shift in sectarian balance but also as a shift in "political loyalty" towards Iran.[244] In addition to this, there was a concern that the aid sent by Indian Shias through the British might lead to a close alliance between the Shia mujtahids, who possessed significant economic and political power, and the British.

Aside from these external threats associated with the spread of Shiism, perhaps the most significant threat was the reports indicating the spread of Shiism among the soldiers of the Sixth Army stationed in Iraq. According to former Basra governor Mehmed Ali, ninety percent of the Sixth Army soldiers were Shia.[245] As Çetinsaya notes, this warning about the Sixth Army caused serious concern for Sultan Abdulhamid II, leading to intense correspondence between Yıldız Palace, military institutions, and local administrators.[246] As a result of this process, a military inspection committee was sent to Iraq in 1890.[247] Since the report of this military inspection committee contains detailed documents on the matter, the report and its related documents will be examined in detail in the next subsection of this chapter.

[244] Yaslıçimen, "Saving the Minds and Loyalties of the Subject," 65.
[245] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 228.
[246] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 229-231.
[247] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 229.

Reports on the spread of Shiism in Iraq included numerous proposed solutions to this "problem." Unlike policies of *tashih-i itikad* directed at other communities, these solutions focused more on preventing the spread of Shiism rather than converting Shiites to Sunnism. Similar to other cases, there was an inclination towards addressing the issue through education and preaching. However, the *tashih-i itikad* policy in Iraq exemplifies the state's most inclusive approach towards a non-Sunni group. In this respect, the case is crucial for analyzing the pragmatic and strategic aspects of the *tashih-i itikad* policy.

The first of these proposals is the strengthening of Sunni ulama and madrasas in the region. For instance, Alusizade Ahmed Shakir Efendi recommended providing monthly financial and food aid to the zawiya of Sheikh Seyyid Sultan Ali in Baghdad to strengthen Sunnism. This proposal was accepted by the Sublime Porte, and the monthly payment was increased over time.[248] Another example provided by Çetinsaya is the allocation of a salary of 700 *kuruş* to Sheikh Taha Efendi in Karbala and a stipend of 30 *kuruş* to his students.[249] According to Alusizade, who himself came from a family of Sunni ulama in Iraq, like the Shiite mujtahids, the Sunni ulama should also have centers to propagate that Sunnism is the "true faith," and the way to achieve this was by strengthening Sunni ulama and institutions in Iraq.[250]

Education was regarded as one of the most potent means of countering the "threat" of the spread of Shiism. Ottoman officials were highly optimistic about the transformative power of education; perceiving the root of the problem as "ignorance," they believed that the spread of Shiism could be reversed through educational efforts.[251] Most reports argued that the curriculum should be

[248] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 228.
[249] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 228.
[250] Bektaş, "Ottoman Response to Missionary Activities of Iranian Shiite Ulema," 510.
[251] Yaslıçimen, "Saving the Minds and Loyalties of the Subject," 71.

predominantly religious. For example, in his report, Mehmed Ali emphasized the need to increase the number of primary and secondary schools offering technical education, while also giving special attention to religious curricula in these schools.[252] Similarly, it was suggested that creed and catechism books, in both Turkish and Arabic, should be written and disseminated widely.[253] On this issue, Selim Sami held a different position from other officials. According to him, Shiism was a sect that appealed to the "ignorant" and "lazy" populace, and its spread could not be halted through religious advice alone. Contrary to other reports, Selim Sami advocated for reducing religious education in favor of subjects like mathematics and geography.[254] Selim Sami's report serves as an example of evaluating the issue within a "civilization" context rather than merely a sectarian/doctrinal problem. Nevertheless, concerns about the presence of Shiites in the military were so strong that, despite the goal of broadening education, Shiite children were not admitted to public schools in Baghdad and Basra until the Second Constitutional Era, due to fears of their potential influence in administrative and military positions.[255]

Another precaution related to education was to bring a certain number of Shiite children to Istanbul for education. Grand Vizier Kamil Paşa emphasized that the spread of Shiism could not be prevented by force, stating that education was the only viable solution. Kamil Pasha's proposal was to educate a few students from cities and towns in Iraq where Shiites lived, on government scholarships, at Al-Azhar University in Cairo.[256] Their beliefs would be "corrected" through the education they received there, and they would return to their homelands to promote Sunnism among

[252] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 229.
[253] Yaslıçimen, "Saving the Minds and Loyalties of the Subject," 67-68.
[254] Yaslıçimen, "Saving the Minds and Loyalties of the Subject," 103-104.
[255] Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire*, 230.
[256] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 231.

the people. Interestingly, Kamil Paşa mentioned that he was inspired by Protestant missionaries in this proposal. According to him, Protestants had also trained some Armenian youths according to their beliefs in their schools and sent these students back as teachers and preachers to spread Protestantism among the Armenian community.[257] While Abdulhamid II accepted this proposal, he decided to establish a school for these students in Istanbul instead of sending them to Al-Azhar.[258] An important point highlighted by Çetinsaya is that Abdulhamid II's objection to sending students to Egypt stemmed from the suspicion that Egypt could be a potential threat to the Ottoman Caliphate.[259] In sum, this situation is significant in showing that the primary aim was to establish loyalty to the caliph and the state rather than merely promoting Sunnism.

The measures planned to counter the spread of Shiism in Iraq were not limited to strengthening Sunnism. Unlike the strict assimilationist stance towards the Kızılbaş, the policy implemented against the Shiites in Iraq aimed, in line with strategic objectives, to align the Shiites with the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan through Shiite mujtahids. The failure of measures to prevent the spread of Shiism introduced the concept of "Shiite-Sunni Unity" to achieve these strategic goals. In this context, the *tashih-i itikad* policy in Iraq, which targets Shiites, serves as an important illustration of the boundaries of the state's "tolerance" towards non-Sunni groups and the factors that motivate it. The reports consistently highlight the importance of avoiding the use of force. The focus on abstaining from coercive methods can also be witnessed in other instances as well. Nevertheless, as the complete eradication of Shiism was not considered an achievable goal, the concept of

[257] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 231-232.
[258] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 232.
[259] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 232.

"Shiite-Sunni unity" was employed to entice Shiite mujtahids to ally themselves with the Ottoman Empire. In this way, "the Shiites, who posed a problem, would be turned into an opportunity."[260]

The Ottoman administration's policy towards the Shiites in Iraq and its relationship with the Shiite mujtahids also had an international dimension. The strong influence of the Shiite ulama and their significant impact on Iranian politics, such as their roles in the tobacco boycott, led to pressure from Iran and Russia on the Ottoman Empire to neutralize the Shiite mujtahids.[261] The interest of Britain in the mujtahids also played a role in the Ottoman State's decision to cease advancing its relationship with them.[262] By the period following 1905, reports emphasized the failure of measures taken in the past twenty years to prevent the spread of Shiism. A report from the Ministry of the Interior in 1906 indicated that sending preachers from Istanbul to the region had no effect, and instead, it was suggested that the existing Sunni madrasas in the area be strengthened.[263] Furthermore, during this period, the idea that education was an "extraordinary" solution began to be shaken. A report stated that education alone would not be sufficient and that policies aimed at improving the material welfare of the people needed to be implemented.[264]

In this chapter, two archival documents about the subject will be examined in-depth, it is also utilized several primary sources regarding the Shiites of Iraq. That is, the approach utilized in this section relies on the analysis of primary sources, similar to the previous section. In contrast to the preceding chapter, this chapter will be subdivided into sections according to the examination of the two archival documents

[260] BOA, Y. EE. 7/17.
[261] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 256-258.
[262] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 258-262.
[263] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 264.
[264] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 267.

rather than by thematic categories. The initial document for analysis comprises a collection of documents, including the report from the Military Inspection Committee dispatched to Iraq, as well as the corresponding answer from Baghdad governor Sırrı Paşa. The reports were authored in 1890 and 1891. The second document is a report entitled "Preventing the spread of Shiism in Iraq" authored by Major Ali Riza Efendi, an official in the Fourth Branch of *Erkan-ı Harbiye* and a former consul in the Iranian cities of Hoy and Salmas. This document was concurrently written. After the analysis of these two documents separately, it will be also mentioned several archival documents pertaining to the subject in the evaluation part of the chapter.

3.5 The Military Inspection Committee's report and Sırrı Paşa's response

One of the most significant documents regarding the Shiite "question" of the Empire was a report that was written by a military inspection committee in 1891.[265] The report not only addressed the Shiite population of the region but also highlighted several challenges for the administration of Iraq, including the influence of Britain and Iran, nomadic tribes, administrative and military deficiencies, and other related issues. The document also had several reports by the governor of Baghdad, Sırrı Paşa, including comments on the report of the inspection committee and the problems of the vilayet and his propositions for these problems.

The inspection committee was appointed to investigate the situation of the "land of Iraq," "*hıtta-i Irakiyye*," which was composed of the vilayets of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. On the whole, main problems that were determined in the report were the spread of Shiism among the Sunni tribes, the weakness of the Sixth Army,

[265] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.

the influence of Iran and Britain in the region, and the problem of the nomad and semi-nomad tribes for the state's centrality and security. The document emphasized ten points.

> First, conducting a population census in the vilayet of Baghdad has numerous challenges, necessitating the deployment of a military force which has the capability to use force effectively. Given the fact that the Sixth Army's situation is like a "paralyzed organ," it is essential to mobilize a minimum of eight infantry battalions and two cavalry regiments from other armies to the region.
>
> Second, due to the fact that the gendarmerie regiment of the vilayet completely gets out of the circle of discipline, it is necessary to regenerate and arrange its order. This also lies beyond the scope of the vilayet's permission.
>
> Third, some administrative and judicial officials have a laxity and negligent approach to their duties. In order to preclusion for their inappropriate situations, there is a necessity to assign a judicial inspector to the Appeal Court of Baghdad.
>
> Fourth, it is imperative to promptly establish the Hamidiye Ferry Company in order to rival the British-operated boats in Shatt al-Arab. This company will likewise yield substantial earnings and revenue.
>
> Fifth, there is a British ferry located on the Tigris River, and within the British Consulate, there are thirty Indian soldiers who are armed. Correspondence was taken place between the vilayet and the British consulate regarding the shipment of these weapons.
>
> Sixth, both the Shiite community in India and Iranians spend significant financial resources annually to propagate the Shiite sect. While the aforesaid sect is spreading day by day, the number of adherents to the Ehl-i Sünnet sect is steadily declining. There are no provisions or methods to hinder this. Even, the Ministry of Education has not authorized the disbursement of a salary of 700 kuruş to a cleric who performs educational and fatwa services pertaining to the Ehl-i Sünnet sect in Samarra.
>
> Seventh, despite the scarcity of highly qualified Ehl-i Sünnet clerics capable of preventing the proliferation of Shiism, the Şeyhülislam Office received two memorandums urging the appointment of the current clerics.
>
> Eighth, it is detected that some tribes migrate to Iran. The Basra governorship should implement measures to prevent their migration and ensure their retention within the Ottoman Empire.
>
> Ninth, reforming civil and judicial officials, as well as the gendarmerie, and ensuring that officers assigned to Iraq are competent in the local language and

> comprehend the temperament of the people are essential precautions. However, these matters are typically not under the authority of the vilayets. In this regard, necessary actions must be taken by the relevant authorities. The situation regarding the Basra shipyard does not concern the vilayet of Baghdad. Despite the need for significant funding to enhance current schools and madrasas, as well as establish new educational institutions, the province lacks the authorization to allocate funds from any source. In this situation, either the vilayet should be granted additional authority to carry out the required measures, or the Sublime Porte should issue an imperative order to the Ministries of Education and Foundations to allocate the education fees and taxes collected for the deceased buried in the 'Atebât-ı Aliyât[266] for this purpose.
> Tenth, preventing the damage perpetrated by the Hemvend bandits is the responsibility of the Mosul vilayet. Nevertheless, last year, the Grand Viziership was informed of several measures that need to be implemented concerning this matter by telegram.[267]

In the report, it was stated that the necessitated precautions for a reformation in Iraq should be implemented by the vilayets of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul cooperatively and coordinately. In addition to this, it was also emphasized that the central institutions are also responsible for the reformation in Iraq. For instance, the first and foremost necessitated implementation is to eradicate the deficiencies of the Sixth Army, and the reorganization of the gendarmerie regiment. These measures are under the authority of the Office of Serasker and the general staff. Therefore, a competent military official should be sent in order to provide the potency of the government by making the Sixth Army an active force through completion its deficiencies.

The inspection report reiterates the inadequacy of the governors' authorization and underlines the significant time lost in seeking approval from the competent authorities to carry out the necessitated precautions for the administrative and political actions and reforms. Because of this reason, it is stated that it is

[266] Atebât-ı Aliyye or Atebât-ı Aliyyât, which means literally the supreme doorsteps, are the shrines of six of the Twelve Imams of Shiites in Iraq in the cities of Najaf, Karbala, Samarra, and Kadhimiya. Many Shiites make pilgrimage to these cities, and there are also madrasas and religious institutions around these Shrines. See; Avni İlhan, "Atebât," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 49-50.
[267] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.

essential to promptly respond to requests for permission from the vilayets and refrain from withholding the requisite authorizations. According to the inspection report, among the most important administrative affairs in Iraq were the conduct of a census, the settlement of tribes, and the prevention of the spread of the Shia sect. The first two matters were considered resolvable by the utilization of a highly capable and intimidating military force. The inspection committee asserts that these subjects, conducting of the census and the settlement of the tribes, have been perceived as arduous policies to be implemented by the governor of Baghdad. Nevertheless, it is indicated that these regulations can be easily enforced with a robust military force, particularly in relation to the settling the tribes, whose members are engaged in agriculture but lack a permanent residence.

On the other hand, as for preventing the spread of the Shia sect, the inspection report explicitly suggests adopting an opposite approach. The document asserts that precautions to be taken against the spread of Shiism are not achievable through coercive means but rather necessitate the implementation of astute strategies, such as promoting education and sending clerics to guide people. After proposing these precautions, it is mentioned that this necessitates an adequate allocation. Although it may be challenging to acquire an allocation comparable to the speculated allocation of the Shiites at present, revenue can be generated by discovering the funds of the abandoned madrasas and charitable institutions that have been illicitly taken out of the state and reclaiming them from those who have misappropriated them. In addition, the deceitful actions and falsehoods of individuals who have misappropriated these funds should not be trusted by the authorities. Nevertheless, considering that the income generated by these foundations will not be sufficient to finance the restoration of the madrasas and sending clerics to the region, it is

proposed that the tax collected on individuals interred in ‘Atebât-ı Aliyât be allocated to these purposes. Lastly, the inspection committee recommends that the Sublime Porte and the Office of Şeyhülislam should take extreme caution in appointing these clerics and officials exclusively among the highly qualified people.[268]

The governor of Baghdad, Sırrı Paşa, evaluates the subjects that were presented by the report of the military inspection committee, point by point, especially the subjects regarding the vilayet of Baghdad. Sırrı Paşa indicates that the first of the aforesaid matters is the conduct of the census. He approaches the subject as a problem of recruitment to the army. He states that “due to the fact that the census for both Baghdad and its neighboring provinces has not been conducted, the recruitment process has only been implemented for the towns where the people registered. Because of this reason, the number of the Sixth Army declined by day by to an astonishing degree.”[269] In addition, he also emphasizes that conducting a census is a very difficult task to implement in Iraq due to the fact that most of the population do not have a permanent residence. According to Sırrı Paşa, some of those people subsist on being engaged in agriculture while they migrate because they do not have their own land to cultivate. The other part of nomads are tribes like Anizah and Shammar, who are not engaged in agriculture, so they can change places as they wish. He continues by stating that “since the inhabitants of this region have not been acclimatized to military service until now, they avoid the sacred military service to such an extent that not even one of them is willing to enlist in the police force.”[270] Sırrı Paşa also indicates that this is the reason why the gendarmerie regiment of the vilayet is composed of Kurds, Circassians, and Chechens. Therefore, Sırrı Paşa’s

[268] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.
[269] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.
[270] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.

argument is that nomad and semi-nomad tribes are afraid of the census at the extreme level because they are aware that it is related to recruitment. As a result, Sırrı Paşa's proposition for the solution of this problem is to create a strong army which has the ability to use coercive measures.

The second matter is the disorder of the gendarmerie regiment of the vilayet. Sırrı Paşa states that both his previous documents and the report of the military inspection committee have determined that this problem is a fact. He also emphasized that he sent report about the problem after two and a half months later his arrival to Baghdad as the governor. According to Sırrı Paşa, the solution of the regiment's disorder is to exchange the officials. However, as he frequently repeated, he states that he does not have an authority to take precautions in this matter.

The third matter is the corruption of the administrative and judicial officials of the vilayet. He states that plenty of officials are negligent for their duties, and some of them have a tendency to bribery and dishonesty. In this subject, Sırrı Paşa also emphasizes that he informed the central government about this problem through reports. His proposal is assigning judicial inspectors to the Appeal Court of Baghdad.

For the fourth matter, Sırrı Paşa indicates that because the subject is about the Britain's policies on the coast of Arabian Peninsula, it is not the Baghdad province's duty to express an opinion and a measure about the subject.

The fifth matter pertains to the British-operated ferries in the Shatt al-Arab and on the Tigris River between Basra and Baghdad. Sırrı Paşa asserts that the formation and operation of the Hamidiye Ferry Company will render the British ferries insignificant, but he refrains from providing an in-depth discussion on this matter.

The sixth matter is to the existence of a British steamship on the Tigris River, along with the accusation that a troop of 30 Indian soldiers was stationed at the British consulate. It is alleged that these soldiers were armed and responsible for guarding the entrance of the consulate. Sırrı Paşa affirms these accusations; however, he specifies that the troops were located within the premises rather than the outside and emphasizes that they are unarmed despite dressed in military attire upon leaving. He mentions certain correspondence with the British Consulate and reports that the soldiers stationed at the Consulate were rotated annually.

The remaining part of the document is primarily concentrated on the subjects related to the spread of Shiism and the potential threats of Shiites to the Ottoman Empire's interests and security, about which Sırrı Paşa made the most detailed evaluation. The seventh matter is Britain's strategy of enticing the Shiites of Iraq by channeling a significant sum of money, donated by the Indian people, to the Shia clerics, students of schools and madrasas, and the janitors of the Atebât-ı Aliye in Najaf, Karbala, and Samarra, by favor of the British consul. Sırrı Paşa asserts that the annual interest of a large sum of money that a member from one of the Indian dynasties had deposited in the Bank of England through the British consul was specifically designated for this purpose. The approximate figure is estimated to be around forty thousand liras. According to him, this money was distributed twice a year to the highly esteemed clerics in the Atebât-ı Aliyât, who subsequently allocated it to other clerics and pupils. In addition, he claims that Mirza Hasan Shirazi, a prominent Shia mujtahid residing in Samarra, also received a comparable amount of money from Iran. Sırrı Paşa asserts that the Shia ulama maintained an affluent way of life thanks to these resources. He emphasizes that the ulama utilized this as a strategy for gaining the favor of the people, aiming to promote Shiism rather than aligning

with Britain or the Iranian state. Sırrı Paşa notes that "due to abundance of these material resources the Shiite ulama, teachers, and students experienced no challenges, and their instructors provided education without any monetary charges. On the other hand, traditional madrasas of Ehl-i Sünnet have largely disappeared. Only a small number of individuals who possess the qualifications to serve as instructors are actually fulfilling this position. Indeed, the majority of them abstain from attending the locations of madrasas for extended periods, preferring to indulge in culinary and beverage consumption rather than fulfilling this sacred obligation. Unquestionably, if a humane authority were to intervene and compel them to fulfill their responsibilities or lawfully attempt to dismiss them from their positions, they would face repercussions and incur severe damages. In addition, only the students of the Imam-ı Azam Madrasa and the Muradiye Madrasa possess spirituality, while students from other madrasas do not. Furthermore, the sole madrasas that have been in existence since ancient times are the ones located in the heart of Baghdad, and there are currently no operational madrasas in the surrounding areas."[271]

After the enunciation of these adverse circumstances, Sırrı Paşa provides two examples that contradict the aforementioned negative ones. Firstly, he asserts that Mustafa Efendi, the mufti of Hille, provided instruction in his residence without demanding any payment and that even the individuals from the Shiite community of the city participated in his "*Buhâri-i Şerîf*" lessons. In another example, he states that Şeyh Taha Efendi of Erbil provided lectures on Hanafi jurisprudence at the madrasa established in Karbala. Along with these two instances, he asserts that Ibrahim Efendi had previously held positions both as instructor and mufti in Samarra but was subsequently dismissed by the former governor of Baghdad, his predecessor, due to

[271] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.

alleged “unjustified complaints” from the Shiite community. According to him, after the dismissal of Ibrahim Efendi, a cleric from Ehl-i Sünnet, named Taha Efendi, was nominated as his replacement. However, Taha Efendi later demanded to resign from his position and transferred it to his brother. Sırrı Paşa indicates that this person was then denied payment from the educational revenues due to financial limitations and that these two people were unable to provide the services of mufti and instructor without compensation. He adds that he informed the Office of Şeyhülislam about this situation through his reports containing “certain action aimed at preventing the spread of Shiism, which attracted government’s attention not only religious but also political standpoint, and to safeguard the Ehl-i Sünnet.”[272]

Sırrı Paşa asserts that the spread of Shiism is not solely a religious issue, emphasizing this point by referencing the state of affairs within the military. He states that the eleventh brigade of the Sixth Army comprises predominantly Shiites, accounting for ninety-five percent of the regiments and battalions, while the remaining portion consists of Sunnis. He explicitly asserts that there is an appropriate concern that the remaining Sunni soldiers may undergo a conversion to Shiism, hence validating the concern. Sırrı Paşa presents a more negative perspective to critique certain measures implemented in the province. “Regrettably, the opportunity [of the struggle against the spread of Shiism] has been missed. Despite the annual allocation of forty thousand liras to Mirza Hasan Shirazi, the Shia mujtahid in Samarra, for the promotion of the Shia sect, a mufti and an instructor have not been paid even 700 kuruş monthly by the education fee for protecting the Ehl-i Sünnet faith. As a result, the position remains vacant, lacking both a mufti and an instructor. Therefore, it is both expected and natural for the children of Ehl-i Sünnet, who are

[272] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.

lacking both a mufti and an instructor, to seek knowledge from the Shia clerics."[273] After indicating his previous reports, he emphasizes that "if this situation continues, protecting the Sunni faith in the region will be extremely challenging."[274]

Sırrı Paşa rejects certain findings made by the committee in the inspection report regarding the infringement of the Ottoman-Iranian borders by some tribes and continues to rectify another aspect of the report. According to him, there may have been a mistake between the terms "school" and "madrasa" in the report regarding the establishment of several educational institutions in Atebât-ı Aliyât with funding from Iran and India because of the fact that Shiites are primarily focused on the religious education rather than "new education," "*maârif-i cedîde*," offered by schools.[275]

Sırrı Paşa expresses his perspective on the suggested solutions regarding the problem outlined in the report throughout the remainder of the document. He asserts that he lacks the authority to initiate the reform of administrative and judicial officials and the qualification of new civil servants. He indicates a desire for the central government to approach this matter with sensitivity.

After indicating that the matter regarding the Basra shipyard is not related to the Baghdad province, Sırrı Paşa repeats the importance of spreading education by way of establishing new schools and madrasas and the betterment of the existing ones. He emphasizes that "it is needless to say that there is a necessity to take action for this situation under the light of abovementioned information."[276] On the other hand, he states that "it is an obvious fact that this action necessitates a large amount of allocation, and the Vilayet does not have an authority to disburse any money for

[273] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.
[274] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.
[275] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.
[276] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.

such new educational institutions."[277] Therefore, Sırrı Paşa demands that either an imperative order for the extension of the Vilayet's authorization or the implementation of anything necessary by the Sublime Porte.

Lastly, Sırrı Paşa mentions the report of the inspection committee, which indicates that the expenses for the construction of new schools and madrasas could be allocated by the taxes are taken by the individuals interred in the Atebât-ı Aliyât in addition to the educational fees. Once more again, he reiterates that this allocation is next to nothing in comparison to the vast resources of the Shiites dedicated to this purpose. Nevertheless, he maintains that "the prompt implementation of this measure will yield significant benefits, provided that there is no favoritism in the selection of instructors."[278]

After his evaluation of the committee's report, Sırrı Paşa adds his previous documents and reports regarding the subjects that were mentioned in the report. Even though his previous reports have almost the same content with his response, some documents are useful to evaluate in terms of Sırrı Paşa's approach to the Shiite "problem" of the Vilayet. Sırrı Paşa transmits reports regarding the problem of Shiism's expansion to the Office of Şeyhülislam, while also providing reports on the tribes to the Office of Grand Vizier. A more comprehensive report addressing both subjects was also transmitted to the Office of Grand Vizier.

In this context, it is useful to analyze some parts of the earlier two documents of Sırrı Paşa. The first document was sent to the Office of Şeyhülislam in 1890, seven months before the response of Sırrı Paşa to the inspection committee's report. Sırrı Paşa begins his report by stating that the spread of the Shia sect among the residents of Baghdad province is unquestionably a result of intolerable overlooking

[277] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.
[278] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.

and leniency of the Ehl-i Sünnet ulema and the government. He states that the primary cause of this situation is the lack of financial resources for the Ehl-i Sünnet clerics in the province, which hinders their ability to fulfill their responsibilities due to the fact that they are preoccupied with earning a livelihood. On the contrary, the Shia ulema, who came from Iran and "penetrated the veins and the nerves of the province's people like polluted blood,"[279] established madrasas in the province using substantial financial resources, aiming to influence the local population and disseminate their "erroneous" beliefs. After drawing attention to the negligence up to this point, he proceeds to elucidate the threatening aspect of the matter. According to Sırrı Paşa, "as a result of these political mistakes, those who belong to the pure Ehl-i Sünnet sect among the inhabitants of the Baghdad province have been in the position like a white spot on a black ox."[280] Having highlighted the danger, he suggests that the state should implement effective measures to thwart the conversion of the remaining Sunni minority to Shiism. As an initial step, he proposes that the state should appoint several muftis to a few places inhabited by Sunnis and should enhance the authority and influence of these muftis. Having proposed this plan of action, he underscores the fact that failing to implement it will end up resulting the threat escalating into a significantly more perilous circumstance. To such an extent that he asserts that this peril will extend beyond the local population of Baghdad. He indicates that "in addition to providing fatwa services, these muftis also have the important responsibility of teaching Sunnis during the night, and if this duty were to cease, there will be no one who has the correct faith of Ehl-i Sünnet, even among the children of civil servants who are strangers here."[281] After restating the significance

[279] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.
[280] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.
[281] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.

of the threat and the need for immediate intervention, he closes his report by proposing specific individuals and their corresponding salaries for the appointment of mufti in various locations.

The second document was sent to the Office of Grand Vizier in 1890, eleven months before the response of Sırrı Paşa to the inspection committee's report. The report commences by presenting information and challenges pertaining to prominent Arab tribes, namely Anizah, Shammar, and Muntafiq. Within the brief section of the document, his evaluation of these tribes and their interactions with Shiism holds significance due to its distinct viewpoint compared to Sırrı Pasha's other reports on Shiites and Shiism. Sırrı Pasha provides the following evaluation in a specific section of the report:

> Although the influence of Rafida has not yet reached these tribes, their absence of knowledge has become so pervasive that they are completely unaware of the fundamental features of the sect to which they are affiliated. In fact, even the Shiite Arabs, let alone such tribesmen who are not yet Rafidis, have never united with their co-sectarian Persians. This is because of the fact that despite sharing the same religious sect, their divergent customs have prevented them from forming a cohesive alliance. In addition, upon learning about the Iranian government's persecution and hostility towards its own citizens, as documented in reports from Iran, it is highly likely that in the event of a future Iranian assault, similar to past occurrences, the Shiite Arabs and particularly the Arab tribes such as Shammar and Anizah, will provide support and assistance to the Ottoman soldiers rather than the Iranian government.[282]

3.6 The report of Major Ali Rıza Efendi

The document comprises 13 sections authored by Major Ali Rıza Efendi, an official serving in the Fourth Branch of the General Staff Office. Its primary focus is on strategies for preventing the growing influence of Shiism in Iraq. The title of the report is also "regarding the prevention of the spread of Shiism in Iraq. Even though

[282] BOA, Y.A.RES. 55/9.

the 1277 Hijri (1860) date indicated on the seal at the end of the document, it is inferred that the report was actually produced in the early 1890s, taking into account Ali Rıza Efendi's arrival date.[283]

In the annex part of the report, Ali Rıza Efendi underscores that during his three-year stay in Iran, he has engaged in Iranian ulema, and acquired knowledge about their circumstances and traditions. After that, he indicates that "for a while, I have been eager to put up a suggestion aimed at preventing the spread of Shiism, which has been gaining ground in Iraq. The occurrence of this was averted due to the intense affliction caused by the sicknesses I had acquired in Arabia, Kurdistan, and ultimately in Iran."[284] Then he praises the medical system and doctors of the Empire who cured him, and now that he has fully recovered and started to write his report about the subject. While Ali Rıza Efendi was engrossed in preparing this draft, he indicates that he came across an article in the newspaper reporting the dispatch of an inspection committee to Baghdad and its surroundings. Therefore, he decided to complete his report without wasting time in order to with the thought that it might contribute to the committee's investigations and inquiries.[285]

Ali Rıza Efendi's report is founded upon his own observations and extensive research conducted over a span of three years while serving as a consulate in the Iranian cities Khoy and Salmas. The report consists of thirteen titles and an annex part. The initial three titles pertain on Shiism and its detrimental impact on Islam. The next four titles discuss the necessary steps must be taken in order to counter the threat of Shiism. The subsequent title concerns his argument that the schools that will be established for this initiative will also bring advantages to the Al-Jazira region.

[283] Kartaloğlu, "Osmanlı Irak'ına Dâir II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Lâyihalarında Şiîlik," 585.
[284] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[285] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

The next three matters are regarding to establish close ties with the Iranian ulema and students in the context of preventing the Shia's danger for the state. In the last two titles, Ali Rıza Efendi specifies the financial means for carrying out these steps and highlights the advantages of the precautions.

The first sub-heading is the "emergence of Shiism. The starting point of the subject for Ali Rıza Efendi is the establishment of the Safavid dynasty. He begins his report by stating that "history shows that the Safavid dynasty strategically employed Shiism as the most vital instrument to solidify their rule in Iran which was founded as a result to compete with the sunlight of the Ottoman Empire."[286]

According to Ali Rıza Efendi, "due to the concurrent rise of the Safavid State with significant events in Iran, the ulema from Transoxiana, who were weary of opposing this new sect that threatened to divide the salvation faction of Muslims, *fırka-i nâciye*, were coerced into silence through financial incentives. Shah Ismail manipulated the thoughts of the people by taking the dervishes to the streets, who transformed his sheikdom to shahdom, to publicly recite several elegies and eulogies. Through the imposition of Shiism onto individuals from all social strata, he effectively consolidated his rule and established a strong division between the Muslims in Far Asia and the central authority of the caliphate."[287]

Ali Rıza Efendi also argues that in order to further propagate their "newly established" sects throughout the Iranian population, the Safavids gradually consolidated their power by blending traditional Iranian customs and national festivities with significant Islamic occasions that adhered to sharia law and were considered legitimate. Similarly, he states that "the Kajar dynasty, which ascended to power in Iran afterwards, similarly sought to disseminate Shiism among the general

[286] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[287] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

populace in their nation by appealing to their proclivity and preference."[288] Ali Rıza Efendi also emphasizes that this circumstance had a significant impact on the Baghdad province and its surrounding areas within the Ottoman Empire, resulting in considerable grief to the state. He continues to analyze by stating the reason of this grief as follow:

> The existence of Atebât-ı Aliyye in Iraq, the substantial number of Iranian visitors to this country annually, the permanent residence of Iranian mujtahids in Atebât-ı Aliyye, and the requirement for students studying in Iran to travel there to obtain their ijazah, all contribute to the need for Iranian ulema to be present in Iraq. On the other hand, due to the scarcity of Ehl-i Sünnet scholars in the region, the Iranian scholars were able to propagate their teachings without hindrance, resulting in the gradual expansion of Shiism in Iraq. The majority of Iraq's Muslim population consists of nomadic Arabs and Bedouins, who have embraced Shiism due to their lack of knowledge of its negative consequences. This acceptance is mostly influenced by the Iranians, who portray Shiism in a favorable light.[289]

In the second article entitled as "the harms caused by Shiism to Islam," Ali Rıza Efendi like in the previous article, solely focuses on the Ottoman and Safavid conflict while discussing the matter. He asserts that the Ottoman Empire was the authentic embodiment of Islam, in fact Sunni Islam, by pointing to the assertion that "any reasonable individual who examines the expansion of the Ottoman Empire acknowledges that the objective of all the sultans who emerged within the state and the politics of the sultanate was "*ilâ-yı kelimetullah,*" spreading the word of Allah. In order to reinforce his argument, he provides instances of the imperative to combat against those who disbelieve and the indispensability of global Muslim solidarity. According to Ali Rıza Efendi:

> The Ottoman sultans' endeavors to eliminate the crusaders, who emerged from Europe in large numbers, were clearly driven by their will to establish a connection between Muslims in the Far East, such as India and China, and the heart of the caliphate. On the contrary, the Safavids' establishment of Shiism as a counterforce to the supreme caliphate resulted in significant territorial losses. Russia captured Khiva and Bukhara, China took control of Kashgar,

[288] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[289] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

> and Britain gained control over Indian Muslims. As a consequence, numerous Muslims were abandoned to the non-believers, an event that will be always remembered by humanity, while also causing irreparable wounds on the patriots.[290]

In the third sub-heading, titled "Shiism," Ali Rıza Efendi begins by referring to another name of this sect, Jafarism, and explains that the creators of Shiism claimed that it was founded by Imam Jafar al-Sadiq in order to enhance its appeals and acquire support.

Within this section of his Shiism definition, similar to the preceding parts, he establishes a direct link between Shiism and post-Safavid Iran, while omitting any mention of the theological complexities and historical context surrounding this subject. By doing this, he underscores the "detrimental" elements and impact of the Iranian ulema. He contends that the Iranian ulema, driven by a strong desire for power and ambition, were corrupted by their love for authority. Their insatiable greed for wealth led them to prioritize personal interests over their faith and the well-being of their community. Consequently, they enforced numerous customs disguised as Islamic principles, which were morally and intellectually detrimental, with the intention of maintaining control over the people and ensuring their obedience. He asserts that the Sunnis, and consequently the Islamic world, have been subjected to slander to such a degree that he would be embarrassed to include them in this report.

Subsequently, he proceeds to elucidate, in a concise manner, the perception of Sunnis in Iran. As per Ali Rıza Efendi's statement:

> In Iran, the difference between a Sunni and a pagan or a Christian is minimal. They abstain from consuming meat that is slaughtered by Christians and instead consume meat that is slaughtered by Sunnis. However, a Shiite person neither gives a girl in marriage to a Sunni nor he is present at their weddings. They abstain attending Sunnis' funeral. They do not have the honor to preserve the property of Sunnis.[291]

[290] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[291] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

After presenting all the information, he ultimately asserts that, based on this viewpoint, it is evident that it is imperative to establish a barrier to impede the spread of Shiism in Iraq.

Following the initial three sub-headings that attempt to introduce the characteristics and dangers posed by Shiism, Ali Rıza Efendi proceeds to present his preventive measures to counter the spread of Shiism in Iraq. Ali Rıza Efendi's first point is that since the whole of Iran, most of India and forty percent of the Iraqi people are Shia, it is never justifiable to employ violence in order to impede the spread of Shiism. According to his argument, employing violence will not only negatively impact the Islamic world but also fulfill the desires of Christian governments who aim to find satisfaction in the eradication of Islam. Consequently, he asserts that it is crucial to implement additional steps in order to prevent the spread of Shiism, or more specifically, to forcibly remove it from the Ottoman Empire. Suggesting that the primary catalyst for the spread of Shiism in Baghdad and Iraq at large is the apathy of the regional authorities, Ali Rıza Efendi asserts if the local officials had been made aware of it, they would have adopted and enforced measures to impede the spread of it. He underscores that due to the local administration and officials neglecting this aspect of the work, it is now incumbent upon the government to enforce these regulations. Subsequently, he presents the following recommendations derived from his personal encounters in Iran:

> Undoubtedly, Shiism is increasingly spreading in Baghdad and its surrounding areas as a result of widespread ignorance. From my firsthand experience working in the consulates of Hoy and Salmas in Iran for a period of three years, I can confidently state that if Shia were not the official sect in Iran, the majority of rational, educated, and globally aware individuals in the country would strongly desire to liberate themselves from the influence of this sect. However, given the establishment of the Iranian state is rooted in this sect, all individuals are compelled to acknowledge and adhere to it, whether they do so freely or unwillingly.

> Given the absence of any obstacles in Iraq like that, actions to eliminate Shiism can be done effortlessly. Given that ignorance is the root cause for the spread of Shiism, the only effective way to eliminate it is to make concerted efforts to construct educational institutions.
>
> By educating individuals about the significance of Allah and the Prophet, and by systematically introducing the historical figures who contributed to the development of Islam, schools will effectively instill Islamic values and beliefs in the minds of youngsters. Consequently, this educational approach will counteract the influence of Iranian indoctrination.
>
> To effectively limit the spread of Shiism, it is imperative to disseminate and impart religious beliefs by establishing elementary schools across Iraq.[292]

The fifth sub-heading of the document is regarding the teachers at the schools. Ali Rıza Efendi indicates that one of the most important aims of establishing schools is to prevent the spread of Shiism, it necessitates that the curriculum has to be religious to a certain extent. In order to succeed this aim, he proposed that the teachers, who have a strong persuasive ability and studied fiqh, should be chosen from those who graduated Darülfünûn and the Imperial Teachers Academy, "*Muallimîn-i Şâhâne*," and they should send there to be obliged to serve the duty of instruction for five years with a sufficient amount of salary.[293] He also states that even though it is possible to find teachers from Iraq for these schools. On the other hand, considering the fact that forty percent of Iraq's population are Shia, these teachers will possibly belong to this sect. Consequently, it is obvious that these teachers will tacitly support Shiism intrinsically. As a result, they will produce damage rather than providing benefits.[294]

Ali Rıza Efendi's opinion suggests that the only feasible option is to educate students with the appropriate qualifications from these two colleges in the capital. While it is not accurate to claim that there are no students capable of this task, he

[292] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[293] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[294] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

also asserts that there are only a limited number of students who can be effectively took advantage of. He concludes this subtitle by stating that "in order to enhance the knowledge and persuasive abilities of students being trained for this purpose of competing with the eloquence of the Shia ulema, it has been suggested to introduce additional courses in the aforementioned schools. However, he emphasizes that the decision to fulfill this requirement lies with the supreme authority and requires their consent."[295]

In the sixth sub-heading, Ali Rıza Efendi discusses the curriculum of the schools designed to counteract the dissemination of Shiism. He stresses that while these schools may align with the curricula of other schools to some degree, in order to fulfill their intended function, it is crucial to provide students with comprehensive instruction on religious topics such as the origins of Islam and the history of the first four caliphs. To highlight a key distinction between Shiism and Sunnism, it is important for educators to underscore the significant contributions made by the first four caliphs to Islam. Additionally, teachers should elucidate the divergent perspectives held by Shiites regarding the legitimacy of these three caliphs, using language that is accessible to students. Furthermore, he emphasizes the significance of teachers scrutinizing the tenets of Shiism beyond the confines of the classroom, employing "gentle language," with the aim of assisting young individuals in "adopting Islam."

Ali Rıza Efendi suggests that if this method is executed efficiently, it would take the Iranians several years to detect the alteration. Even if they were aware of it, their attempts to hinder the achievement of this honorable objective would be

[295] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

ineffective, as Iran does not have the authority to establish schools within the Ottoman Empire.

Ali Rıza Efendi thinks that implementing these approaches would also prove efficacious in resolving other issues. He asserts that the establishment of these institutions in Iraq would enhance the knowledge and skill of the Bedouins and nomadic Arabs, thereby curbing the foreign "vicious" influence in the region. As per Ali Rıza Efendi, this would additionally restrict the effect of external interventions in areas like Syria and Algeria, thereby exerting a substantial influence on both the internal and external policies of the Empire.[296]

In the seven sub-heading, Ali Rıza Efendi discusses supplementary actions that should be implemented with school construction. He mentions the case of the measures that were implemented to counter the spread of Bektashism in Albania.

> Similar to the development of Shiism in Iraq, Bektashism had significant growth in Albania and effectively expanded in and around Yanya. The prevalence of Bektashism in the Sanjak of Elbasan necessitated immediate government intervention to stop its expansion.
>
> In the meantime, the government appointed an individual named Yunus Vehbi Efendi, who has extensive knowledge, political expertise, and significant influence, to lead the committee tasked with overseeing the regulation of the Sanjak of Elbasan. Upon the death of Rafidi, the leader of the Bektashi tekke in Elbasan, he promptly assumed the position and appointed a highly esteemed individual renowned for his erudition, virtues, and dependability. This hindered the re-registration of the tekke as Bektashi.
>
> The person in charge conducted a sequence of proactive measures to counteract the influence of Bektashism, which constituted a challenge to the established order in Elbasan and impeded its advancement. Although complete eradication was not achieved, significant progress was made in reducing its impact and preventing its spread.
>
> Considering the benefits resulting from such a decision, it is conceivable that a comparable strategy could have been executed in Iraq and Yanya. However, the execution and achievement of this plan were contingent upon obtaining consent from the higher authorities.[297]

[296] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[297] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

In this context, it can be observed that the supplementary measures, in addition to the establishment of schools, are not clearly indicated by Ali Rıza Efendi. He makes an analogy between two cases, which took place on two different edges of the Empire. It may be assumed that Ali Rıza Efendi makes this analogy in order to tacitly propose that the government might assign a Sunni cleric to the Atebât-ı Aliyye or Shiites' other institutions in Iraq. In addition to this, his aim might be another emphasis on the importance of the appointment of fully competent officials to the Vilayet, considering the fact that he frequently emphasized that one of the most important reasons for this problem is the negligence of local officials.

The eighth article headed "Al-Jazira's advantages from the aforementioned educational institutions," can be regarded as an intermediate matter. Ali Rıza Efendi asserts that the establishment of schools against Shiism in Iraq will extend the advantages of education to the Bedouin and nomadic Arabs who wander in al-Jazira, or also known as Mesopotamia. Ali Rıza Efendi suggests that once the Bedouins acquire education, they will perceive the current "state of nomadism" as unattractive and will be more inclined towards settling down and embracing civilization. In this way, he asserts that his proposed project about public improvements that were sent previously can be easily applied in the region.

In conjunction with this benefits, Ali Rıza Efendi emphasizes that these steps also resulted in a massive financial development for the Ottoman Empire. According to him, "the land of al-Jazira is an extensive territory spanning 569,000 square kilometers, abundant with blessings, and the sedentarization of the nomadic Arabs residing in the region would significantly contribute to the state's treasury and financial resources."[298] In this context, even though the topic is not primarily

[298] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

regarding the Shiites, Ali Rıza Efendi's approach in this sub-heading is significant to analyze the mission of these precautions that were proposed for the prevention of the spread of Shiism. As can be seen in the next sub-headings, the concern about the Shiite and Bedouin population was not solely based on a sectarian policy which aimed to Sunnitize the non-Sunni Muslims of the Empire. Instead, the emphasis was to bring some communities, who were mostly described as "savage" or "noncivilized" by the officials, to the circle of civilization. At the end of the day, the primary goal was to transform Shiism into a beneficial tool for the state rather than an aim to wipe out Shiism.

In the next three sub-headings, Ali Rıza Efendi examines the Iranian factor in the spread of Shiism in Iraq. Even though he also mentions the Iranian government, his main focus is the Iranian ulema and religious students whose most of educational institutions are in Iraq, especially in Najaf, Karbala, and Samarra. These three sub-headings are "the Iranian ulema," "the necessity of attracting Iranian ulema," and "what should be done for the education of Iranian students."

In the first part of this section, Ali Rıza Efendi begins by stating that being an ulema is the most esteemed and financially prosperous occupation in Iran. According to him, "in Iran, there is no easier way to acquire wealth and property than to study fiqh and become a mullah. A person who was impoverished prior to pursuing a career in this profession attains ownership of Atebât-ı Aliyye."[299] He states that because this situation engaged his attention when he was in Iran, he started to investigate. As a result of his investigation, "it was understood that the Iranian ulema acquire an enormous wealth in a very short time thanks to having an authority on guidance, oversight of foundations and distribution of charitable donations, such as zakat and

[299] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

khums[300] commodities."[301] After emphasizing the financial strength of the Iranian ulema, Ali Rıza Efendi expresses their political power. According to him, "the most popular occupation in Iran is the ulema. Members of this profession also possess courts. The [Iranian] government is required to uphold them. Due to its widespread appeal, today in Iran, one can find men of the highest degree of knowledge and virtue."[302] After expressing the qualification of the Iranian ulema, Ali Rıza Efendi emphasizes that due to the fact that most of these clerics are in the Atebât-ı Aliyye, the Ottoman ulema, whose duty is to serve to prevent the spread of Shiism, should be chosen those who are wise, virtuous, and having the ability of persuasion.[303]

In the next two subheadings, the approach of Ali Rıza Efendi shifts from an absolute anti-Shiite into a more tolerant way for the benefit of the state. What Ali Rıza Efendi suggests as a precaution for the Iranian ulema in the Atebât-ı Aliyye is to establish a cordial and amicable relationship with them. He also criticizes the Ottoman government's negligence in performing such an approach towards the Iranian ulema.

> Although the Iranian ulema have studied and are studying without constraint in the Atebât-ı Aliyye thanks to the benevolence of our Sultan, they did not receive any further privileges from the Ottoman Empire. In fact, their education in that institution spanned a duration of two to three years, and it is only natural that they would develop an affinity for the Ottoman Empire due to the benevolence they experienced during this time. Therefore, it is certain that the defamation of Shiism against Sunnism is going to end, and if it does not, their endeavors would be confined to propagating Shiism alone within the Ottoman Empire, which would be a significant achievement.[304]

[300] Khums refers to the act of allocating one-fifth of the spoils of war, mines, treasures, and excess possessions to the Imam, who is the designated successor of the Prophet. During the absence of Imam, the portion is allocated to Mujtahids on a yearly basis. See Öz, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Şiîlik ve Kolları*, 277.
[301] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[302] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[303] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[304] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

Similar to this way of approach, Ali Rıza Efendi proposes the same method to be implemented on the Iranian students in the Atebât-ı Aliyye in order to gain the favor of the Shiite population. To begin with, he asserts that a large number of Iranian students in Atebât-ı Aliyye are pursuing their studies in extremely unfavorable conditions, residing in homes and inns that are characterized by extreme hardship. He maintains that within this group of students, there are several individuals that require basic necessities for survival. Therefore, he states that if the Ottoman government constructs a madrasa in Karbala and offers sustenance to the students, all Iranian ulema will deeply appreciate this act of generosity. They will also recite blessings in the name of the Sultan during all mourning and lamentation gatherings[305], "*ta'ziye ve mersiye meclisleri*," in Iran. He closes the subject matter by asserting that it is evident that this will result in practical and moral advantages, as the education of the Iranian ulema will likewise undergo scrutiny and regulation.[306]

The twelfth sub-heading addresses the expenditures associated with constructing these institutions as a preventive measure against the spread of Shiism. Ali Rıza Efendi asserts that these institutions would necessitate a substantial amount of expenditure. However, he subsequently proposes that the necessary funds for these charges could be obtained from a tax that was collected as one *mecidiye*[307] from Iranians who sought to bury their deceased in Atebât-ı Aliyye in Iraq by the Ottoman consulate in Kermanshah. Ali Rıza Efendi proposed an alternative solution to the

[305] These rituals, also known as *majâlis*, which means assemblies, are public rituals in the Shiite world on the special religious days, especially the 'Ashurâ, the tenth of the Muharram. These mass rituals encompass a range of theatrical presentations held in mosques and streets, involving actions such as chest beating, flagellating with chains, or inflicting self-harm by cutting the head with a dagger. Additionally, participants engage in chanting mournful elegies. For a detailed information, see; Al-Salihi, "The Ritualistic and Theatrical Elements of Ashura" and Afary & Anderson, *Foucault ve İran Devrimi*, 62-95.
[306] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[307] Mecidiye is an Ottoman currency that began to be minted in the nineteenth century. See; Edhem Eldem, "Chaos and Half Measures," 251–305.

administration, suggesting that if they were not in favor of this suggestion, they could generate income by exposing the foundations in Iraq that were being misused by unknown individuals. According to him, if this can be achieved, there are numerous foundations in Iraq that have been misused for centuries. The substantial revenues generated from this endeavor will be sufficient to guarantee that both nomadic and Bedouin Arabs can also reap the benefits of education and cover the expenses mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, he emphasizes that this requires new steps.[308]

As for the last section, "the benefits of this method," Ali Rıza Efendi summarizes the advantages for the state's interest if these steps can be successfully implemented.

> If these steps are implemented and executed under the sultan's sovereign authority, it will effectively eradicate the current disparities between Sunnism and Shiism, without any knowledge of foreigners. Consequently, it will become apparent that Shiism, which currently acts as a formidable obstacle between the Muslims of the Far East and the center of the Caliphate, will swiftly evolve into the most efficient means of communication.
> Therefore, this necessity, which Sultan Selim I could not bring about by the force of the sword, will be realized by the supreme mercy and compassion of our compassionate father, the Sultan.[309]

3.7 Conclusion

In the documents that are examined in this chapter, it can be determined several common points regarding the Shiites of Iraq. Like in the documents about the Kızılbaş question, there are also two main parts of the issue, threats and solutions. One of the primary concerns of the officials is the spread of Shiism within Iraq, which included three vilayets of the Empire, Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. There has been an intense Shiite population in the center and south of Iraq, namely the vilayets of Baghdad and Basra; however, according to Yitzhak Nakash, there is no evidence

[308] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[309] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.

that the Shiite population was the majority of Iraq even before the twentieth century.[310] On the other hand, even though conversions to Shiism have taken place in the earlier centuries, there occurred massive conversion of tribes to Shiism after the 1850s, which was perceived by the Ottoman government as a serious threat. In addition to the reason of the Shiite expansion was the conversion of Sunni tribes, another threat perception was that the Shiite population was seen as unreliable by the Ottoman Empire in terms of loyalty to the State.[311]

Another threat for the Ottoman government was the British and Iranian influence on the Shiites of Iraq. The documents thoroughly investigate the British political, economic, and military influence in the Iraq and the Shatt al-Arab. In addition, it is reported that the British consul allocated substantial payments, which were annually sent by Indian Shiites to the Atabat, to Shiite mujtahids. According to the documents, this strategic move aimed to garner support from the local population in favor of the British side.

The documents prioritize the concern over Iran's threat over the concern regarding Britain's threat. The Ottoman administration was particularly concerned about the rise of Shiism in Iraq since the province shares a long border with Iran, a historical competitor of the Ottoman Empire that has officially embraced Shiism as its sect for centuries. The fact that the centers where Iranian ulema and religious students received their education and the places of religious pilgrimage were located in Iraq, within the Ottoman borders, also led to the presence of many Iranians there. Their presence in Iraq was also described as a potential threat in the archival documents. A prominent issue in the documents is the propagation of Shiism by

[310] Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism," 443.
[311] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 215.

Iranian mujtahids among the nomadic tribes of Iraq, acting as missionaries. It is emphasized that immediate action was necessary to counter this.

While not classified as a threat, the documents highlight that two factors leading to this problem were the apathy of officials and the state's negligence in allocating funding to address the problem. The issue of neglect is ascribed to the local officials' failure to effectively identify the proliferation of Shiism, their lack of competency, and corruption within the local administration. The other critique is indirectly aimed at the central government. Within this particular framework, the prevailing complaints revolve around the constrained authority of the provinces and the insufficient allocation of finances for the construction of schools, as well as for the remuneration of muftis and instructors. It is frequently highlighted that the Shiites receive substantial assistance from Iran and India about these matters, and it is imperative to allocate a sufficient budget in order to be able to disenable the activities of the Shiite mujtahids.

Apart from the financial problems, according to the documents, the widespread ignorance among the people in the region has significantly facilitated the efforts of these mujtahids in promoting Shiism. As a result, a crucial measure proposed was the construction of madrasas in urban and rural areas within the region. Furthermore, Ali Rıza Efendi's report highlights the requisite credentials of the teachers who would be selected for these schools, the curriculum that would be implemented, and the potential of these schools to address other regional issues and foster regional development. Within this particular setting, while the primary emphasis lies on combating Shiism, many additional measures are also aimed at, including streamlining military enlistment processes and bolstering productivity through the settlement of nomadic tribes.

An important indication that the subject was not solely focused on "restricting Shiism" is the proposal of a strategy to "transform Shiism from a threat into a useful instrument," particularly highlighted in Ali Rıza Efendi's report. A recurring characteristic found in reports from the aforementioned period is the recognition that employing violence was not considered a viable means to struggle against Shiism.[312] Nevertheless, several documents prioritize the conservation of Sunnism, and others prioritize the notion of acquiring governmental benefits through securing the support of Shiite mujtahids. Ali Rıza Efendi's idea that the government's provision of aid to Iranian ulema and students will provide significant advantages is crucial in this particular situation. Ali Rıza Efendi asserts that Abdulhamid II would achieve what Sultan Selim I could not do with "the force of the sword" by virtue of his "supreme benevolence and empathy."[313] Similarly, Ali Galib Bey, the ambassador to Tehran, provides an example of certain Iranians belonging to the Shia faith who expressed discontent with the Iranian government and showed sympathy towards the Ottoman administration. Within the same report, he asserts, "Considering the undeniable persistence of Shiism in Baghdad, it is imperative to imbue its inhabitants and Iranians with the belief that this endurance is attributable to the Ottoman Empire rather than the Iranian government."[314]

Hence, the policy towards the Shiites in Iraq is essential for analyzing the different facets of the policies of Tashih-i İtikad. In this case, the Shiite ulema and the Shia community, who have historically resided in different towns in Iraq, were seen as a potential danger due to their efforts to promote Shiism among nomadic tribes who were considered to be "ignorant" and "outside of the circle of civilization." In

[312] Deringil, "The Struggle against Shiism in Hamidian Iraq," 52.
[313] BOA, Y.EE. 7/17.
[314] BOA, Y.EE. 10/69.

fact, the main goal of the Tashih-i İtikad policy in Iraq was not to eradicate Shiism but to limit and prevent its spread. In this context, the "ignorant" society whose beliefs needed to be corrected was, in fact, the nomadic tribes among whom the Shiism were spreading. In addition to the objective of preventing the spread of Shiism, which was considered a threat by the state, there was also a goal of attracting Shiite mujtahids, who had an important power, to align with the Ottoman side. Here, it may be stated that the state was relatively more "tolerant." Nevertheless, within this "unity" discourse, the superiority of Sunnism was explicitly underlined.[315]

[315] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 240.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Tashih-i itikad, which means correcting of the belief, was a significant aspect of the history of the late Ottoman Empire. *Tashih-i itikad* policies, simply, targeted all of the "unidentified" non-Sunni communities with the aim of "correcting their beliefs" in order to integrate them into the Hanafi/Sunni identity that was tried to construct as a national-identity. The subject of *tashih-i itikad* has been the focus of research on its own, as well as studies that analyze the communities' histories affected by this policy. The common opinion is that this project was constructed as an official state policy on the grounds of Hanafi/Sunni legitimacy in the modernization and centralization policies of the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Abdülhamid II. Furthermore, the theme holds a significant position in the discussions surrounding "Ottoman Orientalism."

The policies and consequences of *tashih-i itikad* extended beyond the rule of Abdülhamid II. Following the decline of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey adopted comparable strategies in its treatment of Alevi policies during this era. As an illustration, in a military document regarding internal threats during the 1980 coup d'état, Alevis were classified as a threat due to their alleged tendency to act against the state under the influence of foreign forces, and they were also described as "a closed-off community that provides assistance to those involved in Kurdish activities."[316] The attitude exhibits similarities to the documents generated about the Kızılbaş during the rule of Abdülhamid II, and the "resolution" aligns with the suggestions presented in the *tashih-i itikad* program. Following the coup, mandatory

[316] Massicard, *Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması*, 69.

religious classes were implemented, focusing exclusively on Hanafi/Sunni doctrines. Additionally, mosques were constructed in Alevi villages and imams were recruited.[317]

The *tashih-i itikad* policy of the Hamidian regime failed in achieving its objectives, but its impact may still be observed, as demonstrated in the paragraph above. Regarding this matter, rather than labeling this effort as a "failure," it can be argued that it served as an early precursor to the measures implemented against sectarian minorities. Hence, it is crucial to thoroughly examine the *tashih-i itikad* project, going beyond the typical identification of problems and offers for solutions in the documents and assessing its planning and implementation in relation to the specific sectarian community it targeted.

This thesis aims to examine the complexities of the *tashih-i itikad* policies, with a particular focus on the Kızılbaş community in Anatolia and the Shiite population in Iraq. Additionally, it briefly discusses other cases, such as the Zaydis and the Nusayris. The first chapter, the introduction, provides an overview of instances from the literature pertaining to the subject. It also offers a concise analysis of the *tashih-i itikad* policies implemented against the Zaydis in Yemen and the Nusayris in Southern Anatolia and Northwestern Syria.

The second chapter examines the perspectives of the Ottoman government and bureaucracy towards the Kızılbaş categorizing them into three sections for analysis. The first section comprises documents and reports authored by the Ottoman government and bureaucrats, which describe the findings of research conducted on the beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles of the Kızılbaş. This indicates that the formerly prevailing strategy of disregarding them has suddenly shifted. The government was

[317] Massicard, *Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması*, 71-72.

currently implementing measures to exert full authority over all communities within the nation's boundaries.

The second section pertains to the menace posed by the Kızılbaş. The documents highlight the reasons why the Kızılbaş posed a potential danger to the state, by providing information about the identity of the Kızılbaş and, in connection to this, explaining why they were considered a potential threat to the state. The primary argument highlighted is that the Kızılbaş were intrinsically untrustworthy due to "their deviation from the orthodox view of Islam." The documents often stress the potential of these people to collaborate with non-Muslims and foreign powers in opposing the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the reports utilize the closeness of the daily interactions between the Kızılbaş and Armenians in rural Anatolia as evidence to support these claims. On the other hand, the sensitivity of this matter to the state, as a result of security policies, prompted rival Ottoman bureaucrats to exploit the situation for their personal rivalries. The conflict between Memduh Paşa and Halil Paşa serves as the most evident illustration of this. Memduh Paşa accused Halil Pasha of displaying tolerance towards the Kızılbaş, while Halil Paşa contended that adopting such approaches would merely transform the religious issue of the Kızılbaş into a political issue.

The third section examines the proposed solutions to the Kızılbaş problem. In summary, the primary policy proposed is *tashih-i itikad*, or the "correction" of the beliefs of the Kızılbaş. While other documents propose a more comprehensive approach, the majority of the suggestions center around the construction of mosques and schools in the Kızılbaş villages, along with the deployment of preachers to these communities. Among these is a draft of Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi's 1894 eight-articled instruction draft. Cemaleddin Efendi describes the procedure to be

followed, the requirements for the officers to be assigned, and their duties in this draft. The question of funding for the suggested measures, however, is absent. In this report, Abdurrahman Hasan Bey states that compared to the Iranian Shiites, the Kızılbaş "are so ignorant that they cannot be defined as human beings."[318] Therefore, he contends that primary schools should be established to teach the Kızılbaş the fundamentals first in order to eradicate their ignorance and that simply promoting Sunnism among them will not be effective.

The third chapter examines the Ottoman Empire's attitude toward the Shiites in Iraq in light of the *tashih-i itikad* agenda through two documents. The sections in this chapter are structured in accordance with the documents rather than the themes because the documents are extensive. The first case examined includes a number of documents, such as the report that the central government sent to Iraq as part of the Military Inspection Committee and the governor of Baghdad's response, Sırrı Paşa. In this instance, Sırrı Paşa highlights how dangerous the rise of Shiism was in the region and how the state had not been able to stop it. Among the things he complaints about most are the lack of funding and the ineptness of the civil workers. His primary suggestion for resolving these two issues is to build new madrasas and revitalize those that already exist.

An extensive report on Shiism written by Major Ali Rıza Efendi, a former consul in Iran, is included in the second section. Similar to Sırrı Paşa, Ali Rıza Efendi also points out the problems, but at the same time suggests a policy of helping Iranian mujtahids to attract Shiism to their side instead of eradicating it.

Here, it is crucial to form a conclusion about the distinctions between the *tashih-i itikad* policies, which are discussed independently in the chapters. Upon

[318] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.

analyzing the documents and literature, it becomes evident that the primary objective of the policy was to convert groups deemed a threat to the state due to their "deviant" beliefs into Sunni Islam by "correcting" their beliefs. However, the extent of the Ottoman administration's attitudes towards non-Sunni groups varied.

During the nineteenth century, the pre-modern attitude towards "heretics," which involved repression, massacres during crucial times, and frequent disregard, underwent a transformation. The state's objective was to delineate the distinctive attributes of every group residing under its authority and transform them from "*reaya*" to "citizens" who would contribute to the welfare of the nation. Thus, the documents often emphasize that resorting to violence against these groups is not a viable means to obtain a settlement. On the other hand, it would be misleading to view this change as the state demonstrating increased "tolerance." The initial purpose of the document production about the non-Sunni communities was to address the issue of assimilating these people into Hanafi/Sunnism rather than focusing on their integration while preserving their distinct identities, beliefs, customs, and lifestyles.

Throughout this period, all reports on the subject, regardless of the various perspectives of the bureaucrats, unanimously concluded that Sunnism was deemed "superior" and the "only legitimate form of belief." However, this "assimilationist tolerance" was not uniformly extended to all non-Sunni groups. Reports and documents, regardless of whether they were produced by the central or provincial bureaucracy, unequivocally rejected the inclusion of the Kızılbaş or Nusayris without withdrawing from their beliefs and identities. Nevertheless, variations can be observed in the attitudes towards Shiites and Zaydis. At this point, the presence of an institutionalized religious belief system rooted in orthodox Sharia law among the Shiites and Zaydis has had an impact on the policies followed, even if the

government did not recognize them. As an illustration, on the one hand, the Ottoman government tried to develop strategies in order to prevent the spread of Shiism; on the other hand, it was thought that the "Sunni-Shia unity" was the best solution for the Shiite "problem" in the long run.[319] The governor of Yemen indicates that the urban Zaydis were "relatively more civilized" than the "savage" tribes, who were predominantly Sunni, and so believed that preaching to them would yield better results.[320] In this context, besides the differentiation between being "*müteşerri*" and "*gayr-i müteşerri*,"[321] it is apparent that the social structures inside communities also played a significant role in the state's policy formation.

The state's different approaches towards the communities targeted by the *tashih-i itikad* policy were influenced by several aspects such as geography, ethno-linguistic identity, and the social structure of these groups. At times, documents may suggest that specific non-Sunni populations were "more civilized" because they were settled and were involved in economic activities. In this context, it can be seen that the *tashih-i itikad* project was an important aspect of the modernization and centralization policies of the Ottoman Empire. This factor has consistently been highlighted as a prominent topic in the studies pertaining to the subject. It was often underlined that the state had varying orientations towards these groups. For instance, the governor of Mamuretülaziz asserted that "due to their lack of knowledge comparable to that of the Shiites, the Kızılbaş cannot even be classified as human beings."[322] However, one important aspect that is highlighted in this thesis is that the

[319] Çetinsaya, *Irak'ta Osmanlı İdaresi*, 240.
[320] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 76.
[321] *Müteşerri*, "those follow the Sharia," and *gayr-i müteşerri*, "those do not follow the Sharia," are useful concepts in order to classify some sects in terms of their belief system and religious structure. According to Rıza Yıldırım uses the term *gayr-i müteşerri* as a shared characteristic of some sects/orders, such as Kızılbaş/Alevis, Nusayris, Bektaşis, Kakais, İsmailis and so on. See Yıldırım, *Aleviliğin Doğuşu*, 19-20.
[322] BOA, DH.TMIK.M. 193/32.

state also made similar distinctions within the groups to which it implemented the *tashih-i itikad* program. The documents generally do not include any concrete differentiation, like in the comparison between the Kızılbaş and Shiites. However, upon closer examination of the discourse and suggested policies, it becomes evident that distinct policies were formulated based on the socioeconomic differences among these groups. In the documents, there are similarities in both the root of the problem and the proposed solutions within the context of the *tashih-i itikad* project. However, the elaboration in the implementation of these policies varied depending on the socio-economic circumstances of the targeted community. For example, when it comes to the policies towards the Kızılbaş, the strategies for Dersim are significantly more systematic in contrast to the assessments of the Kızılbaş in Central Anatolia. At this point, the state's endeavors to cement its power and the tribal system as a hindrance to centralization were impactful for this distinction.

Lastly, despite its overall lack of accomplishment, the strategy of Sunnitization through the *tashih-i itikad* project appears to have had a more significant impact on the Nusayris compared to other groups, resulting in a significant number of "conversions." These large conversions to Sunnism in this circumstance exhibit geographical variations in accordance with Nusayris' location. Considering that Nusayris' relation with the state had varied in terms of their location, in terms of living in mountainous regions or coastal towns,[323] it can be said that this distinction was effective in their reactions to the *tashih-i itikad* policy.

All of these factors also influenced the Ottoman government's threat perception posed by these communities. Even though all non-Sunni groups were

[323] Akbulut, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Nusayrîleri Sünnîleştirme Çabaları," 97.

targeted under the title of *tashih-i itikad*, particular attention was given to regions where the state deemed the threat to be more significant.

REFERENCES

PRIMARY SOURCES

Presidency Ottoman Archives. (BOA. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi).

BOA, A. MKT. MHM. 658/2.

BOA, BEO. 136/10157.

BOA, DH. MKT. 247/34.

BOA, DH. MKT. 286/47.

BOA, DH. MKT. 251/15.

BOA, DH. TMIK. M. 193/32.

BOA, HR. TH. 275/91.

BOA, Y. A. HUS. 108/107.

BOA, Y. A. RES. 55/9.

BOA, Y. A. RES. 70/33.

BOA, Y. EE. 7/17.

BOA, Y. EE. 10/69.

BOA, Y. EE. 132/39.

BOA, Y. EE. 158/23.

BOA, Y. MTV. 131/109.

BOA, Y. MTV. 97/43.

BOA, Y. PRK. DH. 8/6.

BOA, Y. PRK. DH. 7/48.

BOA, Y. PRK. DH. 7/58.

BOA, Y. PRK. HR. 13/129.

BOA, Y. PRK. UM. 29/77.

BOA, Y. PRK. UM. 44/80.

BOA, Y. PRK. UM. 28/70.

BOA, Y. PRK. UM. 30/85.

BOA, Y. PRK. UM. 30/5.

BOA, Y. PRK. UM. 30/54.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Afary, J., & Anderson, K. (2015). *Foucault ve İran devrimi: toplumsal cinsiyet ve İslamcılığın ayartmaları* (M. Doğan, Trans.). Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi.

Akbulut, U. (2014). Sultan II. Abdülhamid Sempozyumu. In *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Sempozyumu: Bildiriler* (pp. 95–110). Ankara, Turkey; Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.

Aksu, A. (2015). *Osmanlı'da iki Amerikalı misyoner: Levi Parsons ve Pliny Fisk'in Anadolu ve Kudüs seyahat raporları (1819-1825)*. Dergah Yayınları.

Al-Salihi, N. A. F. (2014). *The ritualistic and theatrical elements of Ashura* (Unpublished MA thesis). Stony Brook University,.

Barlak, Y. (2019). II. Abdülhamid döneminde Yemen Zeydîlerinin Osmanlı Hilâfetine bakışı. *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırma Dergisi*, *8*(3), 1504–1525.

Bektaş, E. (2019). The Ottoman response to missionary activities of Iranian Shiite ulema. *Osmanlı Mirası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, *6*(16), 505–514.

Blumi, I. (2010). *Rethinking the late Ottoman empire: a comparative social and political history of Albania and Yemen, 1878-1918*. The Isis Press.

Cole, J. (2002). *Sacred space and holy war: the politics, culture and history of Shi'ite Islam*. I.B. Tauris.

Cole, J., & Momen, M. (1986). Mafia, mob and Shiism in Iraq: the rebellion of Ottoman Karbala 1824-1843. *Past and Present*, (112), 112–143.

Çakmak, Y. (2019). *Sultanın Kızılbaşları: II. Abdülhamid döneminde Alevi algısı ve siyaseti*. İletişim Yayınları.

Çetinsaya, G. (2005). The caliphs and mujtahids: Ottoman policy towards the Shiite community of Iraq in the late nineteenth century. *Middle Eastern Studies*, *41*(4), 561–574.

Çetinsaya, G. (2007). The Ottoman view of the Shiite community of Iraq in the late nineteenth century. In A. Monsutti, S. Naef, & F. Sabahi (Eds.), *The other Shiites: from the Mediterranean to Central Asia* (pp. 19–40). essay, Peter Lang.

Çetinsaya, G. (2020). *II. Abdülhamid döneminde Irak'ta Osmanlı idaresi* (Z. Savan, Trans.). Küre Yayınları.

Deringil, S. (1990). The struggle against Shiism in Hamidian Iraq: A Study in Ottoman Propaganda. *Die Welt Des Islam*, *30 (1/4)*, 45–65.

Deringil, S. (2003). "They live in a state of nomadism and savagery": the late Ottoman Empire and the post-colonial debate. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *45*(2), 311–342.

Deringil, S. (2009). *The Well-protected domains*. I.B. Tauris.

Deringil, S. (2019). *Simgeden millete: II. Abdülhamid'den Mustafa Kemal'e devlet ve millet*. İletişim Yayınları.

Eldem, E. (2011). Chaos and half measures: the Ottoman monetary "system" of the nineteenth century. In E. Eldem & S. Petmezas (Eds.), *The Economic Development of South-Eastern Europe (1830-1914)* (pp. 251–305). essay, Alpha Bank.

Findley, C. V. (1982). The advent of ideology in the Islamic Middle East. *Studia Islamica* , (55), 143–169.

Fortna, B. J. (2000). Islamic morality in late Ottoman "secular" schools. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *32*(3), 369–393.

Gölbaşı, E. (2009). "Heretik aşiretler" ve II. Abdülhamid rejimi: zorunlu askerlik meselesi ve ihtida siyaseti odağında Yezidiler ve Osmanlı idaresi. *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, (9), 87–156.

Gündoğdu, C., & Genç, V. (2013). *Dersim'de Osmanlı siyaseti: izâle-i vahşet, tashîh-i itikâd ve tasfiye-i ezhân 1880-1913*. Kitap Yayınevi.

Hakyemez, C. (2014). *Osmanlı-İran ilişkileri ve Sünni Şii ittifakı*. Kitap Yayınevi.

Karakaya-Stump, A. (2015). *Vefailik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık: Alevi kaynaklarını, tarihini, ve tarihyazımını yeniden düşünmek*. İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Karpat, K. H. (2023). *Osmanlı modernleşmesi: toplum, kurumsal değişim ve nüfus* (C. Elitez, Trans.). İletişim Yayınları.

Kartaloğlu, H. (2023). Osmanlı Irak'ına dâir II. Abdülhamid dönemi lâyihalarında Şiîlik. *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, *23*(2), 577–600.

Kern, K. M. (2007). Rethinking Ottoman frontier policies: marriage and citizenship in the province of Iraq. *The Arab Studies Journal*, *15*(1), 8–29.

Kern, K. M. (2014). *Imperial citizen: marriage and citizenship in the Ottoman frontier provinces of Iraq*. Syracuse University Press.

Kieser, H.-L. (2005). *Iskalanmış barış: Doğu vilayetleri'nde misyonerlik, etnik kimlik ve devlet* (A. Dirim, Trans.). İletişim Yayınları.

Kohlberg, E. (1995). Al-Rāfiḍa. In *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Vol. 8, pp. 386–389). E. J. Brill.

Kühn, T. (2002). Ordering urban space in Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1914. In J. Hanssen, T. Philipp, & S. Weber (Eds.), *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire* (pp. 329–348). essay, Orient-Institut.

Kühn, T. (2005). *Shaping Ottoman rule in Yemen, 1872-1919* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation). New York University.

Kühn, T. (2007). Shaping and reshaping colonial Ottomanism: contesting boundaries of difference and integration in Ottoman Yemen, 1872 – 1919. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, *27*(2), 315–331.

Lewis, B. (1988). *The Political language of Islam*. The University of Chicago Press.

Litvak, M. (1998). *Shi'i scholars of nineteenth-century Iraq: The Ulama of Najaf and Karbala*. Cambridge University Press.

Massicard, E. (2007). *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya Alevi hareketinin siyasallaşması* (A. Berktay, Trans.). İletişim Yayınları.

Melikoff, I. (2003). Bektaşilik/Kızılbaşlık: tarihsel bölünme ve sonuçları. In T. Olsson, E. Özdalga, & C. Raudvere (Eds.), B. Kurt Torun & H. Torun (Trans.), *Alevi kimliği* (pp. 3–11). essay, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.

Mertcan, H. (2013). *Türk modernleşmesinde Arap Aleviler (tarih kimlik siyaset)*. Karahan Kitabevi.

Minawi, M. (2016). *The Ottoman scramble for Africa: empire and diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz*. Stanford University Press.

Nakash, Y. (1994). The conversion of Iraq's tribes to Shiism . *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *26*, 443–463.

Ocak, A. Y. (2015). *Alevî ve Bektaşî inançlarının İslam öncesi temelleri*. İletişim.

Ortaylı, İ. (2007). *Batılılaşma yolunda*. Merkez Kitaplar.

Osterhammel, J. (2022). *Dönüşen dünya: küresel 19. yüzyıl tarihi* (M. Tüzel, Trans.). Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.

Öz, M. (2011). *Başlangıçtan günümüze Şiîlik ve kolları*. Ensar Neşriyat.

Özbozdağlı, Ö. (2022). XVIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi. In *XVIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi: Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler* (pp. 1325–1348). Ankara; Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.

Özcan, U. (2012). *II. Abdülhamid dönemi Osmanlı-Karadağ siyasi ilişkileri*. Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.

Reinkowski, M. (2003). Double struggle, no income: Ottoman borderlands in Northern Albania. *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, (9), 239–253.

Scott, J. (2022). *Devlet gibi görmek* (O. Karakaş, Trans.). Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Somel, S. A. (2001). *The modernization of public education in the Ottoman Empire (1839-1908): Islamization, autocracy, and discipline*. Brill.

Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi. (1990). *Siyasi hatıralarım*. Nehir Yayınları.

Teber, Ö. F. (2010). Osmanlı belgelerinde Alevilik için kullanılan dini-diyasi tanımlamalar. In H. İ. Bulut (Ed.), *Anadolu'da Aleviliğin dünü ve bugünü* (pp. 69–80). essay, Sakarya Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Türkyılmaz, Z. (2009). *Anxieties of conversion: missionaries, state and heterodox communities in the late Ottoman Empire* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles.

Van Bruinessen, M. (1996). Kurds, Turks, and the Alevi revival in Turkey. *Middle East Report, 200*, 7–10.

Weber, S. (2018). Suriyeli Kızılbaşlar ve Osmanlı Şiiliği. In C. Woodhead (Ed.), G. Çağalı Güven (Trans.), *Osmanlı dünyası* (pp. 229–244). essay, Alfa Yayınları.

Yaslıçimen, fa. (2016). Saving the minds and loyalties of subjects: Ottoman education policy against the spread of Shiism in Iraq during the time of Abdülhamid II. *Dîvân Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi, 21*(41), 63–108.

Yaslıçimen, F. (2008). *Sunnism versus Shi'ism?: the rise of Shi'i politics and of the Ottoman apprehension in the late nineteenth century Iraq* (Unpublished MA Thesis). Bilkent University.

Yıldırım, R. (2021a). *Aleviliğin doğuşu: Kızılbaş sufiliğinin toplumsal ve siyasal temelleri 1300-1501* (B. Yıldırım, Trans.). İletişim Yayınları.

Yıldırım, R. (2021b). *Geleneksel Alevilik: inanç, ibadet, kurumlar, oplumsal yapı ve bellek*. İletişim Yayınları.